AUTOBIOGRAPHY

EDITED
BY
W. D. HOWELLS

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

MEMOIRS

OF

EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

WITH AN ESSAY

By WILLIAM D. HOWELLS.

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EDWARD GIBBON.

THE Muse of History is a worldly personage, who frequently reserves her favors for devotees in easy circumstances. The pushing aspirants who seize the prizes of poetry, fiction, music, the drama, and the other arts, in which genius is required, are apt to be snubbed by this more exclusive lady, whose cult demands long preparation, costly outlays, and ample leisure. She shows to gentlemen of leisure and elegant culture a polite art, one of the very politest, in which industry and perseverance are enough for success and fame, and too often she seems to exact nothing more. A man may not say that he will be a great poet or a great novelist; but with education, money, and time, one may resolve without unexampled presumption to be a great historian. To be sure, this results in many cases in making great historians what they are: greatest when unread, and the most perishable of the immortals. They have so seldom, indeed, been true literary artists, that one has a certain hesitation in pronouncing any historian a man of genius, and it is with a lasting surprise that one recognizes in the greatest of historians one of the

greatest of geniuses, a writer who possessed in prose, above any other Englishman of his time, the shaping hand; and who moulded the vast masses of his subject into forms of magnificent beauty, giving to their colossal pomp a finish for which there is no word but exquisite.

Yet I think one disposed to be the most sparing of the phrase is quite safe in calling the historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" a man of genius; not for what he has done for history, but what he has done for literature, in showing that no theme is so huge but that art may proportion it and adorn it till it charms; the work which lastingly charms being always and alone the proof of genius. When one turns to his mighty achievement from other histories, one feels that it is really as incomparable for its noble manner as for the grandeur of the story it narrates. That story assumes at his touch the majestic forms, the lofty movement, of an epic; its advance is rhythmical; in the strong pulse of its antitheses is the fire and life of a poetic sense; its music, rich and full, has a martial vigor, its colors are the blazons of shields and banners. One knows very well that this style would be ridiculous applied to a minor theme; the fact is felt throughout Gibbon's Memoirs, where he apparently cannot unbend from the high historic attitude; though even there, when the thought is eloquent, the language stirs the reader's blood by its matchless fitness. One is aware, too, that the polysyllabic port of the Johnsonian diction has been the mock of vengeful generations, escaping from its crushing weight; yet after the thinness and pallor of much conscious simplicity of later date, its Latin affluence has a deep satisfaction; and though none could ever dream of writing such a

style again, yet its use by Gibbon was part of the inspiration with which he wrought his whole work, and gave its magnitude that brilliant texture and thorough solidity which are even more wonderful than its magnitude.

The history of the Decline and Fall remains unapproached for qualities of great artistry, but not unapproachable. It needs merely an equal genius in future historians, to make every passage of the human epic as nobly beautiful. Its author was indefinitely more than a gentleman of fortune, though he was also this, and frankly glories in the fact in that Autobiography,* whose involuntary pomps are now so quaint, (for he promises that "the style shall be simple and familiar,") and he enters with relish upon a brief account of his ancestors whose "chief honor" was Baron Say and Seale, Lord High Treasurer of Henry the Sixth. This nobleman was beheaded by the Kentish insurgents, and his blood seems to have set forever the Tory tint in the politics of the Gibbons. One amusing forefather of the historian, who visited Virginia, had such a passion for heraldry that it caused him to see in the tokens with which the naked bodies of the savages were painted, a proof that "heraldry was grafted *naturally*

* The story of Gibbon's life as he himself tells it was first given to the world by his friend, Lord Sheffield, who included it among the author's Miscellaneous Works in an edition published after his death. He had left six sketches of several periods of his life; he was apparently quite satisfied with none of them; they varied in form, and were written without regard to order of time. Lord Sheffield put them together, scrupulously respecting the text, and where they were too meagre, he supplied material from the author's journals, and himself appended the notes, signed with an S. in this edition. He continued Gibbon's life from the point at which the Memoir leaves it, up to the time of his death, and he published with it a large number of his letters, running in date from 1756 to 1793; he preferred thus to let the author, as far as possible, tell his own story.

into the sense of the human race"; succeeding Gibbons were Royalists and Jacobites; and the historian himself, in whom the name was extinguished, honored its traditions in his abhorrence of the American Rebels and the French Revolutionists.

Gibbon's childhood was sickly, and it was not till his sixteenth year that his health became firm enough to permit him a regular course of study. In the mean time he had lost his mother, the effect of whose early death upon his father he describes in such affecting language, and he remained in the care of a maiden aunt. He had always been more in her care than in that of his mother, and now she made her helpless charge very much her companion and friend, directing his English studies and watching over his delicate health with all a mother's devotion. His schooling had been intermittent and desultory, and he had but a little Latin and no Greek at the age when "Nature displayed in his favor her mysterious energies," and his disorders "wonderfully vanished." He was then taken from a careless and idle tutor by his father, and suddenly entered at Oxford, of which ancient university the reader will find an amusingly contemptuous account in his Autobiography. Though no scholar, he had always been an omnivorous reader. He arrived at Oxford, as he says, "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a school-boy would have been ashamed," and he quitted Magdalen College after fourteen months, "the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life,"—spent under professors who did not lecture and tutors who did not teach, but drowsed away a learned leisure in monkish sloth and Jacobitish disloyalty. "Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal" were

the talk with which the fellows of Magdalen College astonished the ingenuous young gentleman-commoner. It was not unnatural that in his uncontrolled and apparently undirected endeavor he should resolve to write a book, which happened to be "The Age of Sesostris," still unfinished if ever begun; nor was it quite strange that such a youth should turn from the bigoted indifference of his *alma mater*, in spiritual affairs, to the great mother-church. At any rate, Gibbon became at seventeen an ardent Catholic, through pure force of his own reasoning and reading; a conversion which necessarily resulted in his leaving Oxford at once, and in his being presently sent to Lausanne, in Switzerland, where he was placed by his incensed father in the family of the Calvinist pastor, Pavilliard. His new faith did not long withstand the wise and careful approaches of this excellent man, who found his charge exceedingly well-read in the controversial literature of the subject, and who chose silently to let him convict himself of one illogical position after another, rather than openly and constantly to combat him. Upon new premises, Gibbon reasoned himself out of Romanism as he had reasoned himself into it. These changes from faith to faith may have had something to do with unsettling all belief in his mind; but it is not a point upon which he himself touches, and he seems to have re-embraced in all sincerity the Protestant religion. The letters which the Pasteur Pavilliard wrote from time to time concerning the progress of his conversion to Gibbon's father are of curious interest, and paint in suggestive touches not only the mental character of the studious, conscientious, dutiful lad, but that of his firm and gentle guardian. They are glimpses that show them both in a very pleasing light, and one would fain know more

of the simple Swiss pastor, for whom Gibbon always retained a grateful reverence, though Madame Pavilliard's coarse and stinted table he remembered long after with lively disgust.

Under Pavilliard's direction he made great advances in learning, and fully repaired the losses of his sickly childhood and the months wasted at Oxford. His reading, which was always wide enough, gained indefinitely in depth; and this English boy, writing from an obscure Swiss town, could maintain a correspondence with the first scholars of France and Germany, in which they treated him with the distinction due his learning. It was not the education of a gentleman which Gibbon, loving the English ideal of the public school and the university, would have desired for himself, but it was thorough training, and it was full of the delight of a purely voluntary pursuit. He wholly disused his mother tongue during his four years' sojourn at Lausanne, and magnificently as he afterwards wrote it, one can see by various little turns that he wrote it always with something of a subtle foreigner's delight in the superb instrument, rather than a native's perfect unconsciousness. He had, in fact, grown French-Swiss during these years, and at the bottom of his heart he remained so, preferring to end his life in the little city under the Alps, in which he spent the happiest period of his youth, and which he loved better, with its simple and blameless social life, than the great capital of the English world. For a long time after his return to England, he looked to the Continent for the public which he aspired to please; his first publication was written in French, that he might the more directly reach this public, and he imagined several histories in that tongue before he used himself, or reconciled himself, to his alienated English.

He came home not only estranged in language, — this his father could have borne, — but in love and in the hope of marriage with the daughter of the pastor of Crassy, Mademoiselle Susan Curchod, and this his father could not endure. He peremptorily forbade the match, and Gibbon, whose obedience was always somewhat timid, and was in this case perhaps too exemplary, records with his usual neat antithesis: "After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son. My wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life."

The historian tells us, in touching upon this passage of his life, that he "hesitates from an apprehension of ridicule, when he approaches the delicate subject of his early love," and in fact it is not easy to forbear the starting smile, though perhaps for a different reason from that supposed. The ardor of the suitor who sighs as a lover while he obeys as a son, and whose wound is insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life, is certainly not of the heroic sort. It is indeed a passion of too prudent a kind not to be a little comical. Mademoiselle Curchod, like himself, had for the healing of *her* wound, also, time, absence, and the habits of a new life: her father died, she must leave Crassy and go to Geneva, where she "earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother" by teaching young ladies. One does not read with quite the composure of the man who left her to this lot his praises of the nobility with which she bore adversity, while he was sighing as a lover and obeying as a son. Mademoiselle Curchod, who, as he tells us, "in her lowest distress maintained a spotless reputation and a dignified behavior," became the wife of the great Necker and the mother of the great Madame de Staël, "and in the

capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence." Her old lover visited her more than once in her exalted station as the wife of the minister upon whom the whole fabric of the French monarchy rested, and was always treated with the confidence which a man who had obeyed as a son while he sighed as a lover truly merited. M. Necker, fatigued with the cares of office, used to go to bed and leave his wife *tête-à-tête* with the undangerous lover of her youth. One smiles at such a close for love's young dream, and yet in its time the passion was no doubt a sweet and tender idyl. Swiss society had, in Gibbon's day, all the blameless freedom and innocent charm of the society in an American town. The young ladies of Lausanne met at each other's houses without chaperonage of any sort, "among a crowd of young men of every nation of Europe. . . . . They laughed, they sang, they danced, they played at cards, they acted comedies; but in the midst of this careless gayety they respected themselves and were respected by the men." In such perfect ease and unrestraint Gibbon met this young girl, — a local prodigy of learning, as beautiful as she was learned, and as good as she was beautiful, — and won the true and great heart which he suffered himself to lose. In his journal, mingled with the record of his studies, are such entries as: "I saw Mademoiselle Curchod — *Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori.*" "I went to Crassy and stayed two days." "I came back to Lausanne, having passed through Crassy." "Saw Mademoiselle Curchod on my way through Rolle." "I went to Crassy, and stayed there three days." What raptures these simple memoranda hint, and how dreary a void in his life is

suggested by the historian's future recurrences to the sole passion of his life! He never loved, nor thought of loving, any other woman; his hurt was not bravely received, but apparently it was incurable. From time to time he speaks in his letters to Lord Sheffield, after the death of the old friend with whom he went to live in Lausanne, of having a young girl, his relative, to cheer his lonely years and inherit his wealth, but he lived solitary to the end, and a valet smoothed his dying pillow.

It was some seven years after he exhaled his last sigh as a lover that Gibbon first met Madame Necker, who had then been not a great while married. "The Curchod I saw in Paris. She was very fond of me," he writes to Lord Sheffield, "and the husband particularly civil. Could they insult me more cruelly? Ask me every evening to supper; go to bed and leave me alone with his wife, — what an impertinent security! It is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as ever, and much genteeler; seems pleased with her fortune rather than proud of it. I was (perhaps indiscreetly enough) exalting Mariette d'Illens's good luck and the fortune. 'What fortune?' said she with an air of contempt, — 'not above twenty thousand livres a year.' I smiled, and she caught herself immediately. 'What airs I give myself in despising twenty thousand livres a year, who a year ago looked upon eight hundred a year as the summit of my wishes.'" On her part, "I do not know," writes Madame Necker to a friend at Lausanne, in a letter quoted by Sainte-Beuve, "if I have told you that I have seen Gibbon. I have enjoyed that pleasure beyond expression; not that I have any lingering sentiment for a man who, I think, merits none at all," — how keen is the resent-

ment unsheathed for a moment! — "but my feminine vanity has never had a completer, a juster triumph. He staid two weeks at Paris; I had him every day with me; he has become gentle, pliant, humble, modest to bashfulness. Perpetual witness of the tenderness of my husband, of his genius, and of his happiness, a zealous admirer of opulence, he made me notice for the first time that which surrounds me." How these delicate touches insinuate the man! "He has become humble, ... a zealous admirer of opulence," who makes her realize that she is rich! Was the great Mr. Gibbon, then, what is called in the more monosyllabic English of our day a snob? One fears that in some degree he was so, if Madame Necker was right, and not merely resentful. They remained always friends and often correspondents. Ten years later we find him writing to Lord Sheffield from London, where the Neckers then were: "At present I am busy with the Neckers. I live with her just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple, reasonable Suissesse." At Paris, where he is again in 1777, the Neckers are his "principal dependence." "I do not indeed lodge in their house, but I live very much with them, and dine and sup whenever they have company, which is almost every day, and whenever I like, for they are not in the least *exigeans*." Mr. Walpole had introduced him to the famous Madame du Deffand, "an agreeable young lady of eighty-two," who writes him many civilities after his return home. "I have supped once as a third with the Neckers, and have had Madame Necker once at my house. We have spoken of Mr. Gibbon, and what else? Of Mr. Gibbon, always of Mr. Gibbon."

This was when the Neckers were at the height of

their power and prosperity. When poor Louis XVI., the kindest, the unluckiest of his race, made his first great mistake in allowing Maurepas to force Necker to a resignation, Gibbon saw his old love once more at Lausanne, where they passed the summer of 1784. "They afford a new example that persons who have tasted of greatness can seldom return with pleasure to a private station. . . . . *Her* health is impaired by the agitation of her mind, ... and our last parting was very solemn, as I very much doubt whether I shall ever see her again. They have now a very troublesome charge. . . . . Mademoiselle Necker" — afterwards Madame de Staël — "one of the greatest heiresses in Europe, is now about eighteen, wild, vain, but good-natured, and with a much larger provision of wit than of beauty; what increases their difficulties is their religious obstinacy of marrying her to a Protestant. It would be an excellent opportunity for a young Englishman of a great name and a fair reputation." But Mademoiselle Necker was not destined to marry an Englishman, as Mademoiselle Curchod in her time was not; and Madame Necker lived to meet her old lover again in 1790, when, after Necker's recall and final downfall in that of the monarchy, they retired to Copet, and she "maintained more external composure" than he, whom Gibbon found in better spirits the next year. They pressed him to pass some weeks at their house in Geneva, which he afterwards did "most agreeably," what with "the freedom of the morning, the society of the table and drawing-room . . . . in a round of the best company, and . . . . a private supper of free and friendly conversation." He then saw more of Necker's mind than ever before. "All that I saw is fair and worthy. . . . . In the mean while he is abused by all

parties, and none of the French in Geneva will set their foot in his house." Again in 1793 he visited the Neckers, and the next year, when he died in London, was the last year of her life.

Something very high, very pure, very noble, characterized her always, and amidst the corrupt and brilliant society of which she became a leader, and to the good qualities of which she did justice, she was honored for the virtues which few others practised. "Her faults," says Sainte-Beuve, "were not French faults"; she wanted tact, and sometimes she wanted taste, but she never wanted principle, nor a generous mind by which to judge people and conditions so unexpectedly and wholly new to her as those of Paris. "When I came to this country," she wrote back to a friend in Lausanne, "I thought that literature was the key to everything, that men cultivated their minds only by books, and were great only through knowledge," and this sentence, which so perfectly characterizes the young, unworldly, enthusiastic country-girl, also indicates how great was the work before her, — to remodel all her standards and criterions, to make herself over. Sainte-Beuve believes that her health first began to sink under the anxieties and disappointments of this effort. She lamented that she did not even know the language of society, that she hurt people's self-love when she meant to flatter it. "What is called frankness in Switzerland is egotism in Paris," she says. She saw that there her old ideas were all wrong; and, as she says, she hid away her little capital and began working for a living. It must have been by very hard work indeed that she made herself acceptable to the circle of philosophers and literati whom her husband's distinction drew about her, but she did so, and most

acceptable to the best men among them. Better than this, she entered, with her Swiss zeal and practical goodness, upon a life of beneficence as well as social eminence. The Paris hospitals were savage lairs, in which the sick were herded together without comfort or decency, and she founded a hospital of her own which still bears her name; her husband, proud of its success, mentioned it in his official reports to the king, and this fondness made the Parisians laugh. Her most intimate friends, too, had their reserves to the last, which Marmontel at least has but too keenly expressed. To his thinking, she had not the air of the world; she had not taste in dress, nor an easy manner, nor an attractive politeness; her mind and her face were too formal for grace. But, on the other hand, she had propriety, candor, kindness, and culture. Her tastes were from her opinions, not from her feelings. She was a devoted hostess, and eagerly strove to please her guests, but "even her amusements had their reason, their method, ... all was premeditated, nothing flowed naturally." If much of the schoolmistress, in fine, lingered in this great-hearted and good woman, Gibbon apparently never saw it. In all that he says of her there is imaginable a sunset light from his early and only love, —from the days when the ingenuous young Englishman saw the Swiss pastor's daughter in the blossom of "that beauty, pure, virginal, which," as Sainte-Beuve says, "has need of the first youth," with her lovely face "animated by a brilliant freshness, and softened by her blue eyes, full of candor." Her married life was in the highest degree happy; she and her husband reciprocally admired and adored each other; and it must have been with a sense of the perplexing unreality of all past experience that she saw her old

unworthy lover re-enter her world, and grow year by year more famous and more enormously fat in the narrowing circle of her life. What perpetual curiosity, what generous pity, must have piqued her; how strange and sad it must all have been! Upon the whole, I do not know a more provoking love-story in the annals of literature, and though, as Sainte-Beuve says, Gibbon bore his disappointment with a tranquillity that makes one smile, it is not with a smile only that one dwells upon "the delicate subject of his early love."

When he had definitely sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son, he settled down to the dulness of English country life, the trivial pleasures of which, the visits, the talk with commonplace people, afflicted him even more than its monotony, though less perhaps than his misspent service as a captain of the militia which Pitt kept under arms after its supposed usefulness in defying invasion during the Old French War was quite past: this he felt was unfit and unworthy of him. At this time he was occupied with his Essay on the Study of Literature, which he wrote in French, and which in his maturer years humbled him by excellences he had so little improved upon; and he projected a number of histories before he fixed at last upon his great work: he thought of writing the history of the Crusade of Henry the First, of the Barons' Wars against John, the lives of Henry the Fifth and Titus, the Life of Sir Philip Sidney, the History of the Liberty of the Swiss, and that of the Republic of Florence under the Medici. But his studies for an Italian tour, and his subsequent visit to Italy, insensibly confirmed his tendency toward the work of his life, the first conception of which occurred to him at Rome, as

he "sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter."

It was not till after seven years' preparation, that, full of uncertainty and misgiving, this man of a genius unsurpassed and even unapproached in its kind, sat down to write the first chapter of a history which he had not yet named in his own mind; and then he toiled at the mere technique of his work with a patience which teaches the old lesson, eternally true, that genius absolves from no duty to art, and that it achieves its triumphs by endeavors proportioned to its own greatness. "The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation; three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced by three successive revisals from a large volume to their present size." It is thus only that the exquisite is produced. There is no inspiration but that which comes after long travail; Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord until the breaking of the day, before he stood face to face with the Infinite; in spite of all the unfruitful toil in the world, there is no fruit but from toil.

Gibbon had now fixed his home in London, where he became a man of fashion and of the great world, which not many years later he deliberately forsook for the little comfortable world of Lausanne, in whose simple quiet he finished the work begun and largely ad-

vanced in the tumult of the English capital. There were, he tells us, few persons of any eminence in literature or politics to whom he was a stranger, and he stoops to specify, in a grandiose footnote, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, and others, as his fellow-members of the Literary Club. At this period also he entered into political life, and took his seat for the Borough of Liskeard.

He was therefore just seated in Parliament when our troubles with the mother country began, and he took a lively interest in American affairs. But it was not in our behalf; on the contrary, he disliked our cause with all the spirit of a gentleman whose sense of propriety and of property was hurt by our insubordination, and he steadily voted with the government against us, or, as he says with characteristic pomp, he "supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not perhaps the interest, of the mother country." His friend Lord Sheffield adds in a note that "though he was not perfectly satisfied with *every* measure" of the administration for our suppression, "yet he uniformly supported all the principal ones," and what these were we learn not from the Memoir, but from his letters. The Memoir, once clearly defining his attitude, has nothing more to say about us; but the letters mention us often enough, in hope or in despair, as the chance of war is against us or for us. It is always curious to note these fluctuations; it is like a glimpse, by instantaneous photograph, of the feeling of the past. In this case the feeling is that of the great mass of the English nation, and of some of the best Englishmen; for hard as it is for us to understand (the time being so distant, and ourselves being concerned), our friends in England then must have been excusable to most of their fellow-countrymen only

as sentimental idealists, and to many inexcusable as disloyal demagogues. For his part, Mr. Gibbon, in 1774, had no misgivings in supporting Lord North's Boston Port Bill, removing the customs and courts to Salem, "a step so detrimental to the former town, that it must soon reduce it to our own terms, and yet of so mild an appearance" that in the Lords it passed with "some lively conversation but no division." These facts are intermixed with some indecent gossip of the town in which Mr. Gibbon seems to have had the interest of a student of civilization; and his letters do not mention America again till the following year, when we find him tempted by the greatness of the subject to "expose himself" in a speech on American affairs. He never did so, but he was soon one of "three hundred and four to one hundred and five" who voted an address to the throne "declaring Massachusetts Bay in a state of rebellion. More troops, but I fear not enough, go to America, to make an army of ten thousand men at Boston. . . . . I am more and more convinced that with firmness all may go well; yet," he prudently adds, "I sometimes doubt." In the autumn of this year he mentions the government negotiations with the Russians, failing which, we had the Hessians sent us. "We have great hopes of getting a body of these barbarians," the Russians: five and twenty thousand of them, who are to go out as mercenaries, not allies. "The worst of it is that the Baltic will soon be frozen up, and that it must be late next year before they can get to America. In the mean time we are not quite easy about Canada," though in the following January he can congratulate his friend Lord Sheffield (to whom nearly all these letters are written) that Quebec is not *yet* taken. "I hear that Carleton is determined never

to capitulate with rebels, — a glorious resolution if it were supported with fifty thousand men." Unhappily, it needed not half so many to disperse the intrepid little army led to starve and freeze at the foot of that impregnable rock by Arnold and Montgomery; and, twenty days before Gibbon wrote, one of these gallant chiefs had died to glory and the other survived to infamy in the narrow defile of the Sault au Matelot. The writer of the letters does not mention these tidings till June, though they could hardly have been so long in reaching England; and then he couples them with the rumor that Lee is captured, and in his next letter he is pleased to observe that "the old report of Washington's resignation and quarrel with Congress seems to revive," — Lord George Germaine, "with whom I had a long conversation last night, was in high spirits," at another time during that summer, entertaining lively hopes "that the light troops and Indians under Sir William Johnson, who are sent from Oswego down the Mohawk River to Albany, will oblige the Provincials to give up the defence of the Lakes, for fear of being cut off." Things, in fact, fell out much as Lord George Germaine sanguinely foreboded. On "the Lakes" there was a naval combat, "in which the Provincials were repulsed with considerable loss. They burnt and abandoned Crown Point. Carleton is besieging Ticonderoga," but Mr. Gibbon never has the satisfaction of announcing the fall of this post to his noble friend; and though he thinks later that "things go on very prosperously in America," Howe being "in the Jerseys," on his way to the Delaware, and Washington, "who wishes to cover Philadelphia," having "not more than six or seven thousand men with him," while, best of all, a province ("it is indeed only poor little Georgia") has

"made its submission, and desired to be reinstated in the peace of the king," yet presently we read that "America affords nothing very satisfactory," and this being written at Almack's, "Charles Fox is now at my elbow, declaiming on the impossibility of keeping America." The Americans are by this time (the spring of 1777) not only behaving very unsatisfactorily at home, but on the night of the 5th of May "a small privateer fitted out at Dunkirk attacked, took, and has carried into Dunkirk road the Harwich packet. The king's messenger had just time to throw his despatches overboard," and Mr. Gibbon, hearing of this affair at Dover on his way to Paris, is in great doubt whether he had better go on. But he goes on, and at Paris he actually dined with Franklin, the terrible, "by *accident*," as he tells his friend in expressive italics, but dined with him nevertheless, and, let us hope, liked him. At that distance from London he sees clearly the mismanagement of the American business; "a wretched piece of work. The greatest force which any European power ever ventured to transport into that continent is not strong enough even to attack the enemy . . . . and in the mean time you are obliged to call out the militia to defend your own coasts against their privateers." Being returned to England in December, he has to communicate, from his place in the House of Commons, "dreadful news indeed! . . . . An English army of nearly ten thousand men laid down their arms, and surrendered prisoners of war on condition of being sent to England, and of never serving against America. . . . . Burgoyne is said to have received three wounds. General Fraser, with two thousand men, killed. Colonel Ackland likewise killed. A general cry for peace."

It was at last beginning to be time, though peace was far off yet, and Mr. Gibbon's party had much to learn. A year before this he had written: "We talk chiefly of the Marquis de la Fayette, who was here a few weeks ago. He is about twenty, with a hundred and thirty thousand livres a year; the nephew of Noailles, who is ambassador here. He has bought the Duke of Kingston's yacht, and is gone to join the Americans," and now "it is positively asserted both in private and in Parliament, and not contradicted by ministers, that on the 5th of this month," — February, 1778, — "a treaty of commerce (which naturally leads to a war) was signed at Paris with the independent States of America." The administration is by no means premature, then, in proposing an act of Parliament "to declare that we never *had* any intention of taxing America, — another act to empower the crown to name commissions" to stop the fighting, and to grant everything but independence," — by this time the only thing the rebels would accept. Mr. Gibbon amuses himself with this complete about-face of his leader, Lord North, and asks his friend next Friday to take notice of the injunction of the liturgy: "And all the people shall say after the *minister*, Turn us again, O Lord, and so shall we be turned," which may have been the current joke of the hour. In the autumn the temper of government is changed again, and "there are people, large ones, too, who talk of conquering America next summer, with the help of twenty thousand Russians." At this point Mr. Gibbon leaves pretty much all mention of our affairs, and we only find one allusion to America afterwards in his letters, — a passage in which he begs his step-mother to learn for him the particulars concerning "an American

mother who in a short time had lost three sons; one killed by the savages, one run mad from that accident, and the third taken at sea, now in England, a prisoner at Forton Hospital. For *him* something might perhaps be done, ... but you will prudently suppress my request, lest I should raise hopes which it may not be in my power to gratify." In announcing the rumored submission of "poor little Georgia" Mr. Gibbon had been rather merry over the fright of the Georgians at the Indians who had "begun to amuse themselves with the exercise of scalping on their back settlements," but matters of that kind are always different when brought to one's personal notice, and cannot be so lightly treated as at a distance of four thousand miles. In fine, Mr. Gibbon was our enemy upon theory and principle, as a landed gentleman of Tory family should be, and there can be no doubt of his perfect sincerity and uprightness in his course. For my own part, my heart rather warms to his stout, wrong-headed patriotism, as a fine thing in its way, and immensely characteristic, which one ought not to have otherwise, if one could.

It is a pity not to know how he felt towards us when all was over, and whether he ever forgave us our success. But after his retirement to Lausanne, the political affairs which chiefly find place in his letters are those of France, which were beginning to make themselves the wonder and concern of the whole polite world. He first felt the discomfort of having the emigrant noblesse crowding into his quiet retreat, and he murmurs a little at this, though Lausanne is always "infested in summer" by the travelling English, and it "escapes the superlatively great" exiles, the Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, etc., who slip by to Turin.

But France is a horrid scene, with the Assembly voting abstract propositions, Paris an independent Republic, all credit gone, according to "poor Necker," and nobody paying taxes; and it becomes still more abhorrent to the friends of order, as the dissolution of the ancient monarchy advances, "the king brought a captive to Paris; the nobles in exile, the clergy plundered in a way that strikes at the root of all property." Lord Sheffield need not send Mr. Gibbon to Chambery to see a prince and an archbishop in exile; there are now exiles enough and of the noblest at Lausanne, whom in their cheerful adversity and gay destitution one must admire. He is always looking anxiously at England, and he distrusts even the movement, then beginning, against the great crime of civilization. He would be glad, if it proceeded from an impulse of humanity, "but in this rage against slavery, in the numerous petitions against the slave-trade, was there no leaven of new democratical principles, no wild ideas of the rights and natural equality of man?" For that would never do, and would as surely go to the roots of all property in England as in France. He sees clearly the follies of that wonderful time, and he sees as yet no rising master of the situation, no Richelieu, no Cromwell, "either to restore the monarchy or to lead the commonwealth"; it is not in his philosophy, wise as he is in all the past, to imagine a people so inspired with a sense of freedom and of the value of their new-won rights, as to be able to maintain them against the whole of Europe, and to carry the revolution wherever their wild armies go.

This conception comes later, after the fact, and not till the historian, with prodigious amaze, sees these Gallic dogs, these Gallic wolves, these wretched

French republican soldiers, whose "officers, scarcely a gentleman among them," — fancy it! — "without servants or horses or baggage, lie higgledy-piggledy on the ground with the common men, yet maintain a kind of rough discipline over them," — not, I say, till these armies "force the Prussians to evacuate their country, conquer Savoy, pillage Germany, threaten Spain, invade the Low Countries, make Rome and Italy tremble, scour the Mediterranean, and talk of sending a squadron into the South Sea." It is indeed a tremendous and a hateful spectacle, and well may a middle-aged, literary Tory gentleman of landed property forebode that if England "should now be seduced to eat the apple of false freedom," himself and his best friends may soon be "reduced to the deplorable state of the French emigrants." Wolves and dogs? The names are too good for the wretches who have not only beheaded their king, but have involved their upper classes in more distress than any former revolutionists, and have rendered landed property insecure everywhere; henceforth they are "cannibals" and "devils," their "democratical principles lead by a path of flowers into the abyss of hell," and "the blackest demon in hell is the demon of democracy." It is droll to observe how, in these moments of deep emotion, a pagan gentleman is forced back upon a forsaken superstition for the proper imagery in which to clothe his indignation; but where gentility and landed property are concerned, Mr. Gibbon is as good a Christian as any. Indeed, he is so arch-conservative that he humorously accounts for his historical treatment of Christianity on the ground of a sort of high Tory affection "for the old Establishment of Paganism," and no reader of his letters can help observing how

intimately the best feelings of his nature are bound up with the sacred tenure of real-estate and the hallowed security of the funds. Yet, after all, when he thinks of visiting England, he is greatly minded to go home through France. "I am satisfied that there is little or no real danger in the journey; and I must arm myself with patience to support the vexatious insolence of democratical tyranny. I have even a sort of curiosity to spend a few days at Paris, to assist at the debates of the Pandemonium, to seek an introduction to the principal devils, and to contemplate a new form of public and private life, which never existed before, and which I devoutly hope will not long continue to exist," — a burst of piety scarcely to be matched elsewhere in the author's writings.

When, however, he did return to England, in 1793, it was not by way of France, and his errand was not one of curiosity or pleasure. He came home to comfort his friend Lord Sheffield, then broken by the recent death of his wife, and he travelled by a circuitous route through Belgium, as his friend tells us, "along the frontiers of an enemy worse than savage, within the sound of their cannon, and through roads ruined by the enormous machinery of war." Gibbon had now grown portentously stout, but "neither his great corpulency, nor his extraordinary bodily infirmities, nor any other consideration could prevent him a moment from resolving on an undertaking that might have deterred the most active young man." This was after ten years of the tranquil life of Lausanne, which he had voluntarily chosen eight years after his settlement in London, to the vast surprise of all his London friends. They believed that he never would be able to endure it, and they predicted that he would soon be glad to come back. He

shared their misgivings in some degree, and he considers in letters to his different friends the respective advantages of London and Lausanne very seriously. He knew that the larger the place, the more one is let alone in it; he looked forward not only with tenderness but with some alarm to meeting the friends of his youth. But he was tired of political life, and he despaired of political preferment after Burke's Reform Bill had abolished his place on the Board of Trade; his straitened income obliged him to save, and London was expensive; at Lausanne lived his life-long friend George Deyverdun, whose house and heart he might share; in his celibate loneliness he felt the need of intimate daily companionship, and perhaps the place secretly called him by yet fonder associations. Its society, if provincial, was refined, as every society is in which the women are superior to the men; it was simple, and comparatively unexacting. His friend's terrace commanded a magnificent prospect, and the climate was good for his gout. His arrangement was not complex: M. Deyverdun lodged Mr. Gibbon, and Mr. Gibbon boarded M. Deyverdun. In a letter giving to the aunt who watched over his childhood (and whom after so many years of reciprocal affection he addresses as Dear Madam) an account of his way of life at Lausanne, he says of himself and his friend: —

"Perhaps two persons so perfectly fitted to live together were never formed by nature and education. We have both read and seen a great variety of objects; the lights and shades of our different characters are happily blended; and a friendship of thirty years has taught us to enjoy our mutual advantages, and to support our unavoidable imperfections. In love and marriage some harsh sounds will sometimes interrupt the harmony, and in the course of time, like our neighbors, we

must expect some disagreeable moments; but confidence and freedom are the two pillars of our union, and I am much mistaken if the building be not solid and comfortable. In this season I rise (not at four in the morning) but a little before eight; at nine, I am called from my study to breakfast, which I always perform alone in the English style; and, with the aid of Caplin,* I perceive no difference between Lausanne and Bentinck Street. Our mornings are usually passed in separate studies; we never approach each other's door without a previous message, or thrice knocking; and my apartment is already sacred and formidable to strangers. I dress at half past one, and at two (an early hour, to which I am not perfectly reconciled) we sit down to dinner. After dinner and the departure of our company, one, two, or three friends, we read together some amusing book, or play at chess, or retire to our rooms, or make visits, or go to the coffee-house. Between six and seven the assemblies begin, and I am oppressed only with their number and variety. Whist, at shillings or half-crowns, is the game I generally play, and I play three rubbers with pleasure. Between nine and ten we withdraw to our bread and cheese, and friendly converse, which sends us to bed at eleven; but these sober hours are too often interrupted by private or numerous suppers, which I have not the courage to resist, though I practise a laudable abstinence at the best-furnished tables. Such is the skeleton of my life; it is impossible to communicate a perfect idea of the vital and substantial parts, the characters of the men and women with whom I have very easily connected myself in looser and closer bonds, according to their inclination and my own. If I do not deceive myself, and if Deyverdun does not flatter me, I am already a general favorite; and as our likings and dislikings are commonly mutual, I am equally satisfied with the freedom and elegance of manners, and (after proper allowances and exceptions) with the worthy and amiable qualities, of many individuals."

He writes fondly of Deyverdun to Lady Sheffield, and adds: —

* His English valet de chambre.

"The inferior enjoyments of leisure and society are likewise in my power; and in the short excursions which I have hitherto made, I have commenced or renewed my acquaintance with a certain number of persons, more especially women (who, at least in France and this country, are undoubtedly superior to our prouder sex), of rational minds and elegant manners. I breakfast alone, and have declared that I receive no visits in a morning, which you will easily suppose is devoted to study."

Again and again he boasts of his perfect content with Lausanne, in terms that give pleasing glimpses of the life and character of the place, as well as of himself: —

"Of my situation here I have little new to say, except a very comfortable and singular truth, that my passion for my wife or mistress (Fanny Lausanne) is not palled by satiety and possession of two years. I have seen her in all seasons and in all humors; and though she is not without faults, they are infinitely overbalanced by her good qualities. Her face is not handsome, but her person and everything about her has admirable grace and beauty: she is of a very cheerful, sociable temper; without much learning, she is endowed with taste and good sense; and though not rich, the simplicity of her education makes her a very good economist; she is forbid by her parents to wear any expensive finery; and though her limbs are not much calculated for walking, she has not yet asked me to keep her a coach. Last spring (not to wear the metaphor to rags) I saw Lausanne in a new light during my long fit of the gout, and must boldly declare, that either in health or sickness I find it far more comfortable than your huge metropolis. In London my confinement was sad and solitary; the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes's; and the few, who sometimes cast a thought or an eye on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, the distance of the way, or the hours of the House of Commons; and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on Elmsley to enliven the

dulness of the evening. Here the objects are nearer and much more distinct, and I myself am an object of much larger magnitude. People are not kinder, but they are more idle; and it must be confessed that, of all nations on the globe, the English are the least attentive to the old and infirm; I do not mean in acts of charity, but in the offices of civil life. During three months I have had round my chair a succession of agreeable men and women, who came with a smile, and vanished at a nod; and as soon as it was agreeable, I had a constant party at cards, which was sometimes dismissed to their respective homes, and sometimes detained by Deyverdun to supper, without the least trouble or inconvenience to myself."

This also is from a letter to Lady Sheffield. To Lord Sheffield he writes some facts and figures which have a curious interest as showing the cost of a gentleman's bachelor establishment in England and Switzerland a hundred years ago: —

"*What is then, you will ask, my present establishment? This* is not by any means a cheap country; and, except in the article of wine, I could give a dinner, or make a coat, perhaps for the same price in London as at Lausanne. My chief advantage arises from the things which I do not want; and in some respects my style of living is enlarged by the increase of my relative importance; an obscure bachelor in England, the master of a considerable house at Lausanne. Here I am expected to return entertainments, to receive ladies, etc., and to perform many duties of society which, though agreeable enough in themselves, contribute to inflame the housekeeper's bills. But in a quiet, prudent, regular course of life, I think I can support myself with comfort and honor for six or seven hundred pounds a year, instead of a thousand or eleven hundred in England."

After Deyverdun's death, which was a terrible bereavement to Gibbon, he bought a life interest in his

estate on the favorable terms fixed by his friend's will, and continued to live in the same house where they had dwelt together nearly six years in such perfect harmony. Two years before this he had ended his mighty work, an event celebrated in the famous passage which one cannot read without a strong thrill of sympathy with its lofty emotion: —

"I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

One could desire a further account of Gibbon's habits of labor on his history than the very succinct sketch given in his Memoir, but his letters are not much more satisfactory on this point. Method and assiduity were of course the open secrets of his success in an undertaking, the mere material grandeur of which was appalling; but there is something to show that the strain was no day so great as it was continual from day to day. He enjoyed life very well in Lausanne, and he seems not to have curtailed his social pleasures till the year before the completion of his task. In

January of the year that saw its close, he wrote to Lord Sheffield: —

"A long while ago, when I contemplated the distant prospect of my work, I gave you and myself some hopes of landing in England last autumn; but alas! when autumn grew near, hills began to rise on hills, Alps on Alps, and I found my journey far more tedious and toilsome than I had imagined. When I look back on the length of the undertaking, and the variety of materials, I cannot accuse or suffer myself to be accused of idleness; yet it appeared that unless I doubled my diligence, another year, and perhaps more, would elapse before I could embark with my complete manuscript. Under these circumstances I took, and am still executing, a bold and meritorious resolution. The mornings in winter, and in a country of early dinners, are very concise; to them, my usual period of study, I now frequently add the evenings, renounce cards and society, refuse the most agreeable evenings or perhaps make my appearance at a late supper. By this extraordinary industry, which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last part of my History growing apace under my hands; all my materials are collected and arranged; I can exactly compute, by the square foot, or the square page, all that remains to be done; and after concluding texts and notes, after a general review of my time and my ground, I now can decisively ascertain the final period of the Decline and Fall, and can boldly promise that I will dine with you at Sheffield Place in the month of August, or perhaps of July, in the present year; within less than a twelvemonth of the term which I had loosely and originally fixed. And perhaps it would not be easy to find a work of that size and importance in which the workman has so tolerably kept his word with himself and the public."

So good a man of business was this great man of genius! He kept his word with the public, but his infirmities conspired with other causes to make him break it to his friend. He did not dine with Lord

Sheffield as he proposed; he did not go to England till six years later, when he felt himself imperatively called by his friend's sorrows; and then he came also to lay down his own life in his native land. He had long suffered from a dropsical affection resulting from a neglected rupture; it had now become a terrible burden as well as a grotesque deformity, and within a short time after his arrival in England he underwent three operations. They gave relief, but they tried his strength too far, for he succumbed to the third. He had already written his last note to his friend, a letter touchingly prophetic in the weariness of a dying man.

"EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ., TO LORD SHEFFIELD.

"ST. JAMES STREET, Four o'clock, Tuesday.

"This date says everything. I was almost killed between Sheffield Place and East Grinstead, by hard, frozen, long, and cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach to an Indian wigwam. The rest was something less painful; and I reached this place half dead, but not seriously feverish or ill. I found a dinner invitation from Lord Lucan; but what are dinners to me? I wish they did not know of my departure. I catch the flying post. What an effort! Adieu, till Thursday or Friday."

It was in London that he made his end. The operation seemed to have afforded him distinct relief; he talked of a radical cure, of getting back to his beloved Lausanne. He saw his friends on the afternoon before the day of his death (the 16th of January), among them several ladies, with whom he talked, as he liked to do, of the probable duration of his life, which he fixed at from ten to twenty years. No words can be better than those in which Lord Sheffield describes the last moments of the great friend to whose bedside he came too late to see him alive: —

"On that morning, about seven, the servant asked whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar. He answered, no; that he was as well as he had been the day before. At about half past eight he got out of bed, and said he was *plus adroit* than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again, without assistance, better than usual. About nine, he said that he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the valet de chambre returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, "Pourquoi est-ce que vous me quittez?" This was about half past eleven. At twelve he drank some brandy and water from a teapot, and desired his favorite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign to show that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir; his eyes half shut. About a quarter before one he ceased to breathe."

Vastly the greater number of Gibbon's letters in the collection with which Lord Sheffield continues his life are addressed to this faithful friend, with whom he became intimate in their young manhood, and with whom he maintained the closest relations as long as he lived. Lord Sheffield died, full of titles and honors, and the author of many political and politico-economical pamphlets, in 1821, having been forty years in active public life. But his illustrious correspondent, whose miscellaneous works he edited, and in whose fame his memory survives, was a man of the great world of his day, and he wrote letters to many other famous and noble people: letters which have, with all their occasional polysyllabic ponderosity, a lively air of unconsciousness and

of not being written for the public eye, as most letters of that epistolary age seem to have been. It would be unfair to accuse them of a witty or humorous levity, but they are certainly sprightly, after their kind, and are not so hard reading as letters often are. Some of the sprightliest are to Lady Sheffield and to Miss Maria Holroyd, a young lady who amuses herself with his abhorrence of the French Democrats so far as to subscribe herself, "Citoyen Gibbon, je suis ton égal." Two of the best letters are to the lovely Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire, whom he met at Lausanne. In Switzerland, then as now, everybody sooner or later appeared, and one of the letters boasting Gibbon's content with Lausanne opens with the passage: "A few weeks ago, as I was walking on our terrace with M. Tissot, the celebrated physician, M. Mercier, author of the "Tabhan de Paris," the Abbé Raynal, Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle Necker, the Abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Louis the Fifteenth, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, and a dozen counts, barons, and extraordinary persons, among whom was a natural son of the Empress of Russia — Are you satisfied with this list?" Truly it is enough to convince the most incredulous Londoner that Gibbon cannot suffer in Lausanne from the ennui that comes of *too little* society; and his letters all bear witness to the fulness and richness of his social life after his voluntary exile.

Very few of the letters belong to the period of his youth, but there is one, to his Aunt Porten, written during his sojourn with the Pavilliards, which is very interesting, as showing to how great an extent he had lost in his first Swiss residence the idiomatic use of English. It is also interesting for the hope expressed by

the boy of seventeen that Admiral Byng, then on trial for the loss of Minorca, and afterwards hanged, as Voltaire said, *pour encourager les autres*, might not be acquitted. "Though I do not love rash judgments, I cannot help thinking him guilty," writes young Gibbon, who in the same letter presses his aunt to read Sir Charles Grandison, a novel then very fashionable, "which is much superior to Clarissa." A letter dated four years later addresses his father as "Dear Sir," and begs him to give him for a tour in Italy the money he had meant to spend on getting him a seat in Parliament; he declares himself unfitted for public life by tastes, habits, and ambition. A few of the letters relate to the controversy excited by the sceptical character of his history; but all this matter is treated with sufficient fulness in his Memoir, and with a scornful bitterness which spares but one or two of his assailants. "At a distance of twelve years I calmly affirm my judgment of Davies, Chelsum, etc.," — clergymen who had combated his doubts with the weapons of the church militant. "A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They, however, were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was indeed neglected, and I dare not boast of making Dr. Watson a bishop; he is a prelate of a large mind and a liberal spirit: but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davies, and of collating Dr. Apthorpe to an archiepiscopal living." With keen antitheses, like the scythes projecting from either side of the war-cars of the Cimbrians, the historian drives down upon the ranks of his opponents, and leaves them behind him in long swaths. Let us not look longer upon the carnage. He did not spare those who at any period of life wronged or offended him, and many a passage

of his Memoirs is rounded or pointed with the fragments of such criminals.

In the course of his autobiography and letters, he touches a multitude of interesting people and facts, and in the extracts given from his journals the reader will find some curious bits of observation. At Genoa he was introduced to the Doge, and gives us a realistic glimpse of a dignity which must have been very hard upon the "old man, very fat," who bore it: "He receives five thousand livres and expends at least twenty-five thousand for the pleasure of residing in a wretched house, out of which he cannot move without the permission of the Senate." Here at Genoa he heard much interesting talk about the Corsican insurrection headed by Paoli; at Florence he saw on St. John's Day the riderless horse-races, as they are given now only in Rome; he saw the busts of the Roman emperors in the gallery, and his comments on these are too suggestive and important to be curtailed.

Lord Sheffield says of Gibbon's letters that they bear "in general a strong resemblance to the style and turn of his conversation, the characteristics of which were vivacity, elegance, and precision, with knowledge astonishingly extensive and correct," a judgment with which, so far as the knowledge, elegance, and precision go, one cannot very well dispute. The vivacity is apt to die out of letters; so apt that I for one cannot regret the lapse of the epistolary age, and Mr. Gibbon's sprightliness has something of horse, not to say river-horse, play in it now and then. His letters reveal a love of gossip which one rather likes, and a tooth for scandal now and then, which is but human. Occasionally the letters are coarse, but not often; a gentleman would not now write some things he does to the

beautiful Lady Elizabeth Foster; but the gentleman changes very much from century to century; and so does the lady, fortunately. What Lord Sheffield has further to say of his great friend's characteristics is very interesting and quite indisputable: —

"He never ceased to be instructive and entertaining; and in general there was a vein of pleasantry in his conversation, which prevented its becoming languid, even during a residence of many months with a family in the country. It has been supposed that he always arranged what he intended to say before he spoke; his quickness in conversation contradicts this notion: but it is very true, that before he sat down to write a note or letter, he completely arranged in his mind what he meant to express. He pursued the same method in respect to other composition; and he occasionally would walk several times about his apartment before he had rounded a period to his taste. He has pleasantly remarked to me, that it sometimes cost him many a turn before he could throw a sentiment into a form that gratified his own criticism. His systematic habit of arrangement in point of style, assisted, in his instance, by an excellent memory and correct judgment, is much to be recommended to those who aspire to perfection in writing."

But his style had better forever be left his own. It is magnificent; the most magnificent web into which our English has ever been wrought; but its gorgeous textures are for the drapery of a theme uniquely vast and grand; it must fall cumbrous and ridiculous about any other, though for that it is imperially fitting; stiff, but stiff with threads of gold and broidery of precious stones.

It is well, in any study of this sort, to let the man who is the subject of inquiries necessarily vague and unsatisfactory, have the last word for himself; and there are words of Gibbon's, written on his twenty-

sixth birthday, which probably sum up his qualities better than the language of any other critic, allowing, of course, for the changes which years, self-study, and self-discipline gradually made in him : —

" This was my birthday, on which I entered into the twenty-sixth year of my age. This gave me occasion to look a little into myself, and consider impartially my good and bad qualities. It appeared to me, upon this inquiry, that my character was virtuous, incapable of a base action, and formed for generous ones ; but that it was proud, violent, and disagreeable in society. These qualities I must endeavor to cultivate, extirpate, or restrain, according to their different tendency. Wit I have none. My imagination is rather strong than pleasing ; my memory both capacious and retentive. The shining qualities of my understanding are extensiveness and penetration ; but I want both quickness and exactness."

MEMOIRS

OF

EDWARD GIBBON.

IN the fifty-second year of my age, after the completion of an arduous and successful work, I now propose to employ some moments of my leisure in reviewing the simple transactions of a private and literary life. Truth, naked, unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history, must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative. The style shall be simple and familiar; but style is the image of character; and the habits of correct writing may produce, without labor or design, the appearance of art and study. My own amusement is my motive, and will be my reward; and if these sheets are communicated to some discreet and indulgent friends, they will be secreted from the public eye till the author shall be removed beyond the reach of criticism or ridicule.

A lively desire of knowing and of recording our ancestors so generally prevails, that it must depend on the influence of some common principle in the minds of men. We seem to have lived in the persons of our

forefathers; it is the labor and reward of vanity to extend the term of this ideal longevity. Our imagination is always active to enlarge the narrow circle in which nature has confined us. Fifty or an hundred years may be allotted to an individual; but we step forward beyond death with such hopes as religion and philosophy will suggest; and we fill up the silent vacancy that precedes our birth, by associating ourselves to the authors of our existence. Our calmer judgment will rather tend to moderate than to suppress the pride of an ancient and worthy race. The satirist may laugh, the philosopher may preach; but Reason herself will respect the prejudices and habits which have been consecrated by the experience of mankind. Few there are who can sincerely despise in others an advantage of which they are secretly ambitious to partake. The knowledge of our own family from a remote period will be always esteemed as an abstract pre-eminence, since it can never be promiscuously enjoyed; but the longest series of peasants and mechanics would not afford much gratification to the pride of their descendant. We wish to discover our ancestors, but we wish to discover them possessed of ample fortunes, adorned with honorable titles, and holding an eminent rank in the class of hereditary nobles, which has been maintained for the wisest and most beneficial purposes in almost every climate of the globe, and in almost every modification of political society.

Wherever the distinction of birth is allowed to form a superior order in the state, education and example should always, and will often, produce among them a dignity of sentiment and propriety of conduct, which is guarded from dishonor by their own and the public

esteem. If we read of some illustrious line so ancient that it has no beginning, so worthy that it ought to have no end, we sympathize in its various fortunes; nor can we blame the generous enthusiasm, or even the harmless vanity, of those who are allied to the honors of its name. For my own part, could I draw my pedigree from a general, a statesman, or a celebrated author, I should study their lives with the diligence of filial love. In the investigation of past events our curiosity is stimulated by the immediate or indirect reference to ourselves; but in the estimate of honor we should learn to value the gifts of nature above those of fortune; to esteem in our ancestors the qualities that best promote the interests of society; and to pronounce the descendant of a king less truly noble than the offspring of a man of genius, whose writings will instruct or delight the latest posterity. The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world. After a painful ascent of eight or ten centuries, our barons and princes of Europe are lost in the darkness of the Middle Ages; but in the vast equality of the empire of China, the posterity of Confucius have maintained above two thousand two hundred years their peaceful honors and perpetual succession. The chief of the family is still revered, by the sovereign and the people, as the lively image of the wisest of mankind. The nobility of the Spencers has been illustrated and enriched by the trophies of Marlborough; but I exhort them to consider the Fairy Queen * as the most precious jewel

* "No less praiseworthy are the ladies three,
The honour of that noble familie
Of which I meanest boast myself to be."
SPENSER, *Colin Clout*, etc., V. 538.

of their coronet. Our immortal Fielding was of the younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh, who draw their origin from the Counts of Habsburg, the lineal descendants of Eltrico, in the seventh century Duke of Alsace. Far different have been the fortunes of the English and German divisions of the family of Habsburg: the former, the knights and sheriffs of Leicestershire, have slowly risen to the dignity of a peerage; the latter, the emperors of Germany and kings of Spain, have threatened the liberty of the Old and invaded the treasures of the New World. The successors of Charles the Fifth may disdain their brethren of England; but the romance of Tom Jones, that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the imperial eagle of the house of Austria.

That these sentiments are just, or at least natural, I am the more inclined to believe, as I am not myself interested in the cause; for I can derive from my ancestors neither glory nor shame. Yet a sincere and simple narrative of my own life may amuse some of my leisure hours; but it will subject me, and perhaps with justice, to the imputation of vanity. I may judge, however, from the experience both of past and of the present times, that the public are always curious to know the men who have left behind them any image of their minds: the most scanty accounts of such men are compiled with diligence and perused with eagerness; and the student of every class may derive a lesson, or an example, from the lives most similar to his own. My name may hereafter be placed among the thousand articles of a Biographia Britannica; and I must be conscious that no one is so well qualified as myself to describe the series of my thoughts

and actions. The authority of my masters, of the grave Thuanus and the philosophic Hume, might be sufficient to justify my design: but it would not be difficult to produce a long list of ancients and moderns, who in various forms have exhibited their own portraits. Such portraits are often the most interesting, and sometimes the only interesting parts of their writings; and if they be sincere, we seldom complain of the minuteness or prolixity of these personal memorials. The lives of the younger Pliny, of Petrarch, and of Erasmus, are expressed in the epistles which they themselves have given to the world. The essays of Montaigne and Sir William Temple bring us home to the houses and bosoms of the authors: we smile without contempt at the headstrong passions of Benvenuto Cellini and the gay follies of Colley Cibber. The confessions of St. Augustin and Rousseau disclose the secrets of the human heart: his commentaries of the learned Huet have survived his evangelical demonstration; and the memoirs of Goldoni are more truly dramatic than his Italian comedies. The heretic and the churchman are strongly marked in the characters and fortunes of Whiston and Bishop Newton; and even the dulness of Michael de Marolles and Anthony Wood acquires some value from the faithful representation of men and manners. That I am equal or superior to some of these, the effects of modesty or affectation cannot force me to dissemble.

My family is originally derived from the county of Kent. The southern district, which borders on Sussex and the sea, was formerly overspread with the great forest Anderida, and even now retains the denomina-

tion of the Weald, or Wood-land. In this district, and in the hundred and parish of Rolvenden, the Gibbons were possessed of lands in the year 1326; and the elder branch of the family, without much increase or diminution of property, still adheres to its native soil. Fourteen years after the first appearance of his name, John Gibbon is recorded as the *marmorarius* or architect of King Edward the Third: the strong and stately castle of Queensborough, which guarded the entrance of the Medway, was a monument of his skill; and the grant of an hereditary toll on the passage from Sandwich to Stonar in the isle of Thanet is the reward of no vulgar artist. In the visitations of the heralds the Gibbons are frequently mentioned: they held the rank of esquire in an age when that title was less promiscuously assumed: one of them, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was captain of the militia of Kent; and a free school in the neighboring town of Benenden proclaims the charity and opulence of its founder. But time, or their own obscurity, has cast a veil of oblivion over the virtues and vices of my Kentish ancestors; their character or station confined them to the labors and pleasures of a rural life; nor is it in my power to follow the advice of the poet, in an inquiry after a name, —

> "Go! search it there, where to be born, and die,
> Of rich and poor makes all the history," —

so recent is the institution of our parish registers. In the beginning of the seventeenth century a younger branch of the Gibbons of Rolvenden migrated from the country to the city; and from this branch I do not blush to descend. The law requires some abilities, the church imposes some restraints; and before our

army and navy, our civil establishments, and Indian empire, had opened so many paths of fortune, the mercantile profession was more frequently chosen by youths of a liberal race and education, who aspired to create their own independence. Our most respectable families have not disdained the counting-house, or even the shop; their names are enrolled in the livery and companies of London; and in England, as well as in the Italian commonwealths, heralds have been compelled to declare that gentility is not degraded by the exercise of trade.

The armorial ensigns which in the times of chivalry adorned the crest and shield of the soldier are now become an empty decoration, which every man, who has money to build a carriage, may paint according to his fancy on the panels. My family arms are the same which were borne by the Gibbons of Kent in an age when the college of heralds religiously regarded the distinctions of blood and name: a lion rampant gardant, between three scallop-shells argent, on a field azure. I should not, however, have been tempted to blazon my coat of arms, were it not connected with a whimsical anecdote. About the reign of James the First, the three harmless scallop-shells were changed by Edmund Gibbon, Esq., into three ogresses, or female cannibals, with a design of stigmatizing three ladies, his kinswomen, who had provoked him by an unjust lawsuit. But this singular mode of revenge, for which he obtained the sanction of Sir William Seagar, king at arms, soon expired with its author; and on his own monument in the Temple Church the monsters vanish, and the three scallop-shells resume their proper and hereditary place.

Our alliances by marriage it is not disgraceful to

mention. The chief honor of my ancestry is James Fiens, Baron Say and Seale, and Lord High Treasurer of England, in the reign of Henry the Sixth; from whom, by the Phelips, the Whetnalls, and the Cromers, I am lineally descended in the eleventh degree. His dismission and imprisonment in the Tower were insufficient to appease the popular clamor; and the treasurer, with his son-in-law Cromer, was beheaded (1450), after a mock trial by the Kentish insurgents. The black list of his offences, as it is exhibited in Shakespeare, displays the ignorance and envy of a plebeian tyrant. Besides the vague reproaches of selling Maine and Normandy to the dauphin, the treasurer is especially accused of luxury, for riding on a foot-cloth, and of treason, for speaking French, the language of our enemies. "Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm," says Jack Cade to the unfortunate lord, "in erecting a grammar school; and whereas before, our forefathers had no other books than the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee who usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear." Our dramatic poet is generally more attentive to character than to history; and I much fear that the art of printing was not introduced into England till several years after Lord Say's death: but of some of these meritorious crimes I should hope to find my ancestor guilty; and a man of letters may be proud of his descent from a patron and martyr of learning.

In the beginning of the last century, Robert Gibbon, Esq., of Rolvenden in Kent (who died in 1618), had a

son of the same name of Robert, who settled in London, and became a member of the clothworkers' company. His wife was a daughter of the Edgars, who flourished about four hundred years in the county of Suffolk, and produced an eminent and wealthy sergeant-at-law, Sir Gregory Edgar, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. Of the sons of Robert Gibbon (who died in 1643), Matthew did not aspire above the station of a linen-draper in Leadenhall Street; but John has given to the public some curious memorials of his existence, his character, and his family. He was born on the 3d of November in the year 1629; his education was liberal, at a grammar school, and afterwards in Jesus College at Cambridge; and he celebrates the retired content which he enjoyed at Allesborough in Worcestershire, in the house of Thomas Lord Coventry, where he was employed as a domestic tutor. But the spirit of my kinsman soon emerged into more active life; he visited foreign countries as a soldier and a traveller, acquired the knowledge of the French and Spanish languages, passed some time in the isle of Jersey, crossed the Atlantic, and resided upwards of a twelvemonth (1659) in the rising colony of Virginia. In this remote province, his taste, or rather passion, for heraldry found a single gratification at a war-dance of the native Indians. As they moved in measured steps, brandishing their tomahawks, his curious eye contemplated their little shields of bark, and their naked bodies, which were painted with the colors and symbols of his favorite science. "At which," says he "I exceedingly wondered, and concluded that heraldry was ingrafted *naturally* into the sense of human race. If so, it deserves a greater esteem than nowadays is put upon it." His return to England after the restoration was soon followed by

his marriage, — his settlement in a house in St. Catherine's Cloister near the Tower, which devolved to my grandfather, — and his introduction into the herald's college (in 1671) by the style and title of Blue-mantle Pursuivant at Arms. In this office he enjoyed, near fifty years, the rare felicity of uniting in the same pursuit his duty and inclination: his name is remembered in the college, and many of his letters are still preserved. Several of the most respectable characters of the age, Sir William Dugdale, Mr. Ashmole, Dr. John Betts, and Dr. Nehemiah Grew, were his friends; and in the society of such men John Gibbon may be recorded without disgrace as the member of an astrological club. The study of hereditary honors is favorable to the royal prerogative; and my kinsman, like most of his family, was a high Tory, both in church and state. In the latter end of the reign of Charles the Second, his pen was exercised in the cause of the Duke of York; the republican faction he most cordially detested; and as each animal is conscious of its proper arms, the herald's revenge was emblazoned on a most diabolical escutcheon. But the triumph of the Whig government checked the preferment of Blue-mantle; and he was even suspended from his office till his tongue could learn to pronounce the oath of abjuration. His life was prolonged to the age of ninety; and, in the expectation of the inevitable though uncertain hour, he wishes to preserve the blessings of health, competence, and virtue. In the year 1682 he published at London his "Introductio ad Latinam Blasonium"; an original attempt, which Camden had desiderated, to define in a Roman idiom the terms and attributes of a Gothic institution. It is not two years since I acquired, in a foreign land, some domestic intelligence of my own

family; and this intelligence was conveyed to Switzerland from the heart of Germany. I had formed an acquaintance with Mr. Langer, a lively and ingenious scholar, while he resided at Lausanne as preceptor to the hereditary Prince of Brunswick. On his return to his proper station of librarian to the ducal library of Wolfenbuttel, he accidentally found among some literary rubbish a small old English volume of heraldry, inscribed with the name of John Gibbon. From the title only Mr. Langer judged that it might be an acceptable present to his friend; and he judged rightly. His manner is quaint and affected; his order is confused; but he displays some wit, more reading, and still more enthusiasm; and if an enthusiast be often absurd, he is never languid. An English text is perpetually interspersed with Latin sentences in prose and verse; but in his own poetry he claims an exemption from the laws of prosody. Amidst a profusion of genealogical knowledge, my kinsman could not be forgetful of his own name; and to him I am indebted for almost the whole information concerning the Gibbon family. From this small work (a duodecimo of one hundred and sixty-five pages) the author expected immortal fame; and at the conclusion of his labor he sings, in a strain of self-exultation: —

"Usque huc corrigitur Romana Blasonia per me;
Verborumque dehinc barbara forma cadat.
Hic liber, in meritum si forsitan incidet usum,
Testis ritè meæ sedulitatis erit.
Quicquid agat Zoilus, ventura fatibitur ætas
Artis quòd fueram non Clypearis inops."

Such are the hopes of authors! In the failure of those hopes John Gibbon has not been the first of his profession, and very possibly may not be the last of

his name. His brother Matthew Gibbon, the draper, had one daughter and two sons,—my grandfather Edward, who was born in the year 1666, and Thomas, afterwards Dean of Carlisle. According to the mercantile creed, that the best book is a profitable ledger, the writings of John the herald would be much less precious than those of his nephew Edward: but an author professes at least to write for the public benefit; and the slow balance of trade can be pleasing to those persons only to whom it is advantageous. The successful industry of my grandfather raised him above the level of his immediate ancestors; he appears to have launched into various and extensive dealings: even his opinions were subordinate to his interest; and I find him in Flanders, clothing king William's troops, while he would have contracted with more pleasure, though not perhaps at a cheaper rate, for the service of King James. During his residence abroad, his concerns at home were managed by his mother Hester, an active and notable woman. Her second husband was a widower of the name of Acton: they united the children of their first nuptials. After his marriage with the daughter of Richard Acton, goldsmith in Leadenhall Street, he gave his own sister to Sir Whitmore Acton, of Aldenham; and I am thus connected, by a triple alliance, with that ancient and loyal family of Shropshire baronets. It consisted about that time of seven brothers, all of gigantic stature; one of whom, a pygmy of six feet two inches, confessed himself the last and the least of the seven; adding, in the true spirit of party, that such men were not born since the revolution. Under the Tory administration of the four last years of Queen Anne (1710–14) Mr. Edward Gibbon was appointed one of the com-

missioners of the customs; he sat at that board with Prior: but the merchant was better qualified for his station than the poet, since Lord Bolingbroke has been heard to declare that he had never conversed with a man who more clearly understood the commerce and finances of England. In the year 1716 he was elected one of the directors of the South Sea Company; and his books exhibited the proof that, before his acceptance of this fatal office, he had acquired an independent fortune of sixty thousand pounds.

But his fortune was overwhelmed in the shipwreck of the year —20, and the labors of thirty years were blasted in a single day. Of the use or abuse of the South Sea scheme, of the guilt or innocence of my grandfather and his brother directors, I am neither a competent nor a disinterested judge. Yet the equity of modern times must condemn the violent and arbitrary proceedings which would have disgraced the cause of justice, and would render injustice still more odious. No sooner had the nation awakened from its golden dream, than a popular and even a parliamentary clamor demanded their victims; but it was acknowledged on all sides, that the South Sea directors, however guilty, could not be touched by any known laws of the land. The speech of Lord Molesworth, the author of "The State of Denmark," may show the temper, or rather the intemperance, of the House of Commons. "Extraordinary crimes," exclaimed that ardent Whig, "call aloud for extraordinary remedies. The Roman lawgivers had not foreseen the possible existence of a parricide; but as soon as the first monster appeared, he was sewn in a sack, and cast headlong into the river; and I shall be content to inflict the same treatment on the authors of our present ruin."

His motion was not literally adopted; but a bill of pains and penalties was introduced, a retroactive statute, to punish the offences which did not exist at the time they were committed. Such a pernicious violation of liberty and law can be excused only by the most imperious necessity; nor could it be defended on this occasion by the plea of impending danger or useful example. The legislature restrained the persons of the directors, imposed an exorbitant security for their appearance, and marked their characters with a previous note of ignominy: they were compelled to deliver, upon oath, the strict value of their estates; and were disabled from making any transfer or alienation of any part of their property. Against a bill of pains and penalties it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his counsel at the bar: they prayed to be heard; their prayer was refused; and their oppressors, who required no evidence, would listen to no defence. All were condemned, absent and unheard, in arbitrary fines and forfeitures, which swept away the greatest part of their substance.

My grandfather could not expect to be treated with more lenity than his companions. His Tory principles and connections rendered him obnoxious to the ruling powers: his name is reported in a suspicious secret; and his well-known abilities could not plead the excuse of ignorance or error. In the first proceedings against the South Sea directors, Mr. Gibbon is one of the few who were taken into custody; and, in the final sentence, the measure of his fine proclaims him eminently guilty. The total estimate which he delivered on oath to the House of Commons amounted to £106,543 5*s.* 6*d.* exclusive of antecedent settlements. Two different allowances of £15,000 and of £10,000

were moved for Mr. Gibbon ; but, on the question being put, it was carried without a division for the smaller sum. On these ruins, with the skill and credit of which Parliament had not been able to despoil him, my grandfather, at a mature age, erected the edifice of a new fortune : the labors of sixteen years were amply rewarded ; and I have reason to believe that the second structure was not much inferior to the first. He had realized a very considerable property in Sussex, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, and the New River Company ; and had acquired a spacious house,* with gardens and lands, at Putney in Surrey, where he resided in decent hospitality. He died in December, 1736, at the age of seventy ; and by his last will, at the expense of Edward, his only son (with whose marriage he was not perfectly reconciled), enriched his two daughters, Catherine and Hester. The former became the wife of Mr. Edward Elliston ; their daughter and heiress, Catherine, was married in the year 1756 to Edward Eliot, Esq. (now Lord Eliot), of Port Eliot in the county of Cornwall ; and their three sons are my nearest male relations on the father's side. A life of devotion and celibacy was the choice of my aunt, Mrs. Hester Gibbon, who, at the age of eighty-five, still resides in a hermitage at Cliffe in Northamptonshire, having long survived her spiritual guide and faithful companion, Mr. William Law, who, at an advanced age, about the year 1761, died in her house. In our family he had left the reputation of a worthy and pious man, who believed all that he professed, and practised all that he enjoined. The character of a non-juror, which he maintained to the last, is a sufficient evidence

* Since inhabited by Mr. Wood, Sir John Shelley, the Duke of Norfolk, etc. S.

of his principles in church and state; and the sacrifice of interest to conscience will be always respectable. His theological writings, which our domestic connection has tempted me to peruse, preserve an imperfect sort of life, and I can pronounce with more confidence and knowledge on the merits of the author. His last compositions are darkly tinctured by the incomprehensible visions of Jacob Behmen; and his discourse on the absolute unlawfulness of stage-entertainments is sometimes quoted for a ridiculous intemperance of sentiment and language. "The actors and spectators must all be damned; the playhouse is the porch of hell, the place of the Devil's abode, where he holds his filthy court of evil spirits: a play is the Devil's triumph, a sacrifice performed to his glory, as much as in the heathen temples of Bacchus or Venus," etc., etc. But these sallies of religious frenzy must not extinguish the praise which is due to Mr. William Law as a wit and a scholar. His argument on topics of less absurdity is specious and acute, his manner is lively, his style forcible and clear; and had not his vigorous mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times. While the Bangorian controversy was a fashionable theme, he entered the lists on the subject of Christ's kingdom and the authority of the priesthood: against the plain account of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper he resumed the combat with Bishop Hoadley, the object of Whig idolatry and Tory abhorrence; and at every weapon of attack and defence the non-juror, on the ground which is common to both, approves himself at least equal to the prelate. On the appearance of the "Fable of the Bees," he drew his pen against the licentious doctrine that private vices are public benefits;

and morality as well as religion must join in his applause. Mr. Law's master-work, the "Serious Call," is still read as a popular and powerful book of devotion. His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel; his satire is sharp, but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy of the pen of La Bruyère. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame; and a philosopher must allow that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world. Under the names of Flavia and Miranda he has admirably described my two aunts, — the Heathen and the Christian sister.

My father, Edward Gibbon, was born in October, 1707: at the age of thirteen he could scarcely feel that he was disinherited by act of Parliament; and, as he advanced towards manhood, new prospects of fortune opened to his view. A parent is most attentive to supply in his children the deficiencies of which he is conscious in himself: my grandfather's knowledge was derived from a strong understanding, and the experience of the ways of men; but my father enjoyed the benefits of a liberal education as a scholar and a gentleman. At Westminster School, and afterwards at Emanuel College in Cambridge, he passed through a regular course of academical discipline; and the care of his learning and morals was intrusted to his private tutor, the same Mr. William Law. But the mind of a saint is above or below the present world; and while the pupil proceeded on his travels, the tutor remained at Putney, the much-honored friend and spiritual director of the whole family. My father resided some time at Paris, to acquire the fashionable exercises; and as

his temper was warm and social, he indulged in those pleasures for which the strictness of his former education had given him a keener relish. He afterwards visited several provinces of France; but his excursions were neither long nor remote; and the slender knowledge which he had gained of the French language was gradually obliterated. His passage through Besançon is marked by a singular consequence in the chain of human events. In a dangerous illness Mr. Gibbon was attended, at his own request, by one of his kinsmen of the name of Acton, the younger brother of a younger brother, who had applied himself to the study of physic. During the slow recovery of his patient the physician himself was attacked by the malady of love: he married his mistress, renounced his country and religion, settled at Besançon, and became the father of three sons, the eldest of whom, General Acton, is conspicuous in Europe as the principal minister of the King of the Two Sicilies. By an uncle whom another stroke of fortune had transplanted to Leghorn he was educated in the naval service of the emperor; and his valor and conduct in the command of the Tuscan frigates protected the retreat of the Spaniards from Algiers. On my father's return to England, he was chosen, in the general election of 1734, to serve in Parliament for the borough of Petersfield; a burgage tenure, of which my grandfather possessed a weighty share, till he alienated (I know not why) such important property. In the opposition to Sir Robert Walpole and the Pelhams, prejudice and society connected his son with the Tories, — shall I say Jacobites, or, as they were pleased to style themselves, the country gentlemen? With them he gave many a vote; with them he drank many a bottle. Without acquiring the

fame of an orator or a statesman, he eagerly joined in the great opposition which, after a seven years' chase, hunted down Sir Robert Walpole; and in the pursuit of an unpopular minister, he gratified a private revenge against the oppressor of his family in the South Sea persecution.

I was born at Putney, in the county of Surrey, the 27th of April, O. S., in the year 1737; the first child of the marriage of Edward Gibbon, Esq., and of Judith Porten.* My lot might have been that of a slave, a savage, or a peasant; nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilized country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honorable rank and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune. From my birth I have enjoyed the right of primogeniture; but I was succeeded by five brothers and one sister, all of whom were snatched away in their infancy. My five brothers, whose names may be found in the parish register of Putney, I shall not pretend to lament; but from my childhood to the present hour I have deeply and sincerely regretted my sister, whose life was somewhat prolonged, and whom I remember to have seen an amiable infant. The relation of a brother and a sister, especially if they do not marry, appears to me of a very singular nature. It is a familiar and tender friendship with a female much about our own age; an affection

* The union to which I owe my birth was a marriage of inclination and esteem. Mr. James Porten, a merchant of London, resided with his family at Putney, in a house adjoining to the bridge and churchyard, where I have passed many happy hours of my childhood. He left one son (the late Sir Stanier Porten) and three daughters,— Catherine, who preserved her maiden name, and of whom I shall hereafter speak; another daughter married Mr. Darrel of Richmond, and left two sons, Edward and Robert; the youngest of the three sisters was Judith, my mother.

perhaps softened by the secret influence of sex, but pure from any mixture of sensual desire; the sole species of platonic love that can be indulged with truth and without danger.

The death of a new-born child before that of its parents may seem an unnatural, but it is strictly a probable event; since of any given number the greater part are extinguished before their ninth year, before they possess the faculties of the mind or body. Without accusing the profuse waste or imperfect workmanship of nature, I shall only observe that this unfavorable chance was multiplied against my infant existence. So feeble was my constitution, so precarious my life, that in the baptism of my brothers my father's prudence successively repeated my Christian name of Edward, that, in case of the departure of the eldest son, this patronymic appellation might be still perpetuated in the family.

"Uno avulso non deficit alter."

To preserve and to rear so frail a being, the most tender assiduity was scarcely sufficient; and my mother's attention was somewhat diverted by her frequent pregnancies, by an exclusive passion for her husband, and by the dissipation of the world, in which his taste and authority obliged her to mingle. But the maternal office was supplied by my aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten, at whose name I feel a tear of gratitude trickling down my cheek. A life of celibacy transferred her vacant affection to her sister's first child; my weakness excited her pity; her attachment was fortified by labor and success; and if there be any, as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted. Many anxious and solitary days did she consume in the patient trial

of every mode of relief and amusement. Many wakeful nights did she sit by my bedside in trembling expectation that each hour would be my last. Of the various and frequent disorders of my childhood my own recollection is dark, nor do I wish to expatiate on so disgusting a topic. Suffice it to say, that while every practitioner, from Sloane and Ward to the Chevalier Taylor, was successively summoned to torture or relieve me, the care of my mind was too frequently neglected for that of my health; compassion always suggested an excuse for the indulgence of the master or the idleness of the pupil; and the chain of my education was broken as often as I was recalled from the school of learning to the bed of sickness.

As soon as the use of speech had prepared my infant reason for the admission of knowledge, I was taught the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. So remote is the date, so vague is the memory, of their origin in myself, that, were not the error corrected by analogy, I should be tempted to conceive them as innate. In my childhood I was praised for the readiness with which I could multiply and divide, by memory alone, two sums of several figures: such praise encouraged my growing talent; and had I persevered in this line of application, I might have acquired some fame in mathematical studies.

After this previous instruction at home, or at a day-school at Putney, I was delivered at the age of seven into the hands of Mr. John Kirby, who exercised about eighteen months the office of my domestic tutor. His own words, which I shall here transcribe, inspire in his favor a sentiment of pity and esteem. "During my abode in my native county of Cumberland, in quality of an indigent curate, I used now and then in a sum-

mer, when the pleasantness of the season invited, to take a solitary walk to the seashore, which lies about two miles from the town where I lived. Here I would amuse myself, one while in viewing at large the agreeable prospect which surrounded me, and another while confining my sight to nearer objects, in admiring the vast variety of beautiful shells thrown upon the beach; some of the choicest of which I always picked up, to divert my little ones upon my return. One time among the rest, taking such a journey in my head, I sat down upon the declivity of the beach with my face to the sea, which was now come up within a few yards of my feet; when immediately the sad thoughts of the wretched condition of my family, and the unsuccessfulness of all endeavors to amend it, came crowding into my mind, which drove me into a deep melancholy, and ever and anon forced tears from my eyes." Distress at last forced him to leave the country. His learning and virtue introduced him to my father; and at Putney he might have found at least a temporary shelter, had not an act of indiscretion again driven him into the world. One day reading prayers in the parish church, he most unluckily forgot the name of King George; his patron, a loyal subject, dismissed him with some reluctance, and a decent reward; and how the poor man ended his days I have never been able to learn. Mr. John Kirby is the author of two small volumes: the Life of Automathes (London, 1745), and an English and Latin Grammar (London, 1746); which, as a testimony of gratitude, he dedicated (November 5, 1745) to my father. The books are before me; from them the pupil may judge the preceptor; and, upon the whole, his judgment will not be unfavorable. The grammar is executed with accuracy and skill, and I know not

whether any better existed at the time in our language; but the Life of Automathes aspires to the honors of a philosophical fiction. It is the story of a youth, the son of a shipwrecked exile, who lives alone on a desert island from infancy to the age of manhood. A hind is his nurse; he inherits a cottage, with many useful and curious instruments; some ideas remain of the education of his two first years; some arts are borrowed from the beavers of a neighboring lake; some truths are revealed in supernatural visions. With these helps and his own industry Automathes becomes a self-taught though speechless philosopher, who had investigated with success his own mind, the natural world, the abstract sciences, and the great principles of morality and religion. The author is not entitled to the merit of invention, since he has blended the English story of Robinson Crusoe with the Arabian romance of Hai Ebu Yokhdan, which he might have read in the Latin version of Pocock. In the Automathes I cannot praise either the depth of thought or elegance of style; but the book is not devoid of entertainment or instruction; and among several interesting passages I would select the discovery of fire, which produces by accidental mischief the discovery of conscience. A man who had thought so much on the subjects of language and education was surely no ordinary preceptor; my childish years and his hasty departure prevented me from enjoying the full benefit of his lessons; but they enlarged my knowledge of arithmetic, and left me a clear impression of the English and Latin rudiments.

In my ninth year (January, 1746), in a lucid interval of comparative health, my father adopted the convenient and customary mode of English education; and I was sent to Kingston-upon-Thames, to a school of

about seventy boys, which was kept by Dr. Wooddeson and his assistants. Every time I have since passed over Putney Common, I have always noticed the spot where my mother, as we drove along in the coach, admonished me that I was now going into the world, and must learn to think and act for myself. The expression may appear ludicrous, yet there is not in the course of life a more remarkable change than the removal of a child from the luxury and freedom of a wealthy house to the frugal diet and strict subordination of a school; from the tenderness of parents and obsequiousness of servants to the rude familiarity of his equals, the insolent tyranny of his seniors, and the rod, perhaps, of a cruel and capricious pedagogue. Such hardships may steel the mind and body against the injuries of fortune; but my timid reserve was astonished by the crowd and tumult of the school; the want of strength and activity disqualified me for the sports of play-field; nor have I forgotten how often in the year '46 I was reviled and buffeted for the sins of my Tory ancestors. By the common methods of discipline, at the expense of many tears and some blood, I purchased the knowledge of the Latin syntax; and not long since I was possessed of the dirty volumes of Phædrus and Cornelius Nepos, which I painfully construed and darkly understood. The choice of these authors is not injudicious. The *lives* of Cornelius Nepos, the friend of Atticus and Cicero, are composed in the style of the purest age; his simplicity is elegant, his brevity copious; he exhibits a series of men and manners; and with such illustrations as every pedant is not indeed qualified to give, this classic biographer may initiate a young student in the history of Greece and Rome. The use of fables or apologues has been approved in every

age from ancient India to modern Europe. They convey in familiar images the truths of morality and prudence; and the most childish understanding (I advert to the scruples of Rousseau) will not suppose either that beasts *do* speak, or that men *may* lie. A fable represents the genuine characters of animals; and a skilful master might extract from Pliny and Buffon some pleasing lessons of natural history, a science well adapted to the taste and capacity of children. The latinity of Phædrus is not exempt from an alloy of the silver age; but his manner is concise, terse, and sententious: the Thracian slave discreetly breathes the spirit of a freeman; and when the text is sound the style is perspicuous. But his fables, after a long oblivion, were first published by Peter Pithou, from a corrupt manuscript. The labors of fifty editors confess the defects of the copy, as well as the value of the original; and the school-boy may have been whipped for misapprehending a passage which Bentley could not restore, and which Burman could not explain.

My studies were too frequently interrupted by sickness; and after a real or nominal residence at Kingston School for near two years, I was finally recalled (December, 1747) by my mother's death, which was occasioned, in her thirty-eighth year, by the consequences of her last labor. I was too young to feel the importance of my loss; and the image of her person and conversation is faintly imprinted in my memory. The affectionate heart of my aunt, Catherine Porten, bewailed a sister and a friend; but my poor father was inconsolable, and the transport of grief seemed to threaten his life or his reason. I can never forget the scene of our first interview some weeks after the fatal event; the awful silence, the room hung with black,

the midday tapers; his sighs and tears; his praises of my mother, a saint in heaven; his solemn adjuration that I would cherish her memory and imitate her virtues; and the fervor with which he kissed and blessed me as the sole surviving pledge of their loves. The storm of passion insensibly subsided into calmer melancholy. At a convivial meeting of his friends Mr. Gibbon might affect or enjoy a gleam of cheerfulness; but his plan of happiness was forever destroyed; and after the loss of his companion, he was left alone in a world, of which the business and pleasures were to him irksome or insipid. After some unsuccessful trials, he renounced the tumult of London and the hospitality of Putney, and buried himself in the rural, or rather rustic, solitude of Buriton; from which, during several years, he seldom emerged.

As far back as I can remember, the house, near Putney Bridge and the churchyard, of my maternal grandfather appears in the light of my proper and native home. It was there that I was allowed to spend the greatest part of my time, in sickness or in health, during my school vacations and my parents' residence in London, and, finally, after my mother's death. Three months after that event, in the spring of 1748, the commercial ruin of her father, Mr. James Porten, was accomplished and declared. As his effects were not sold, nor the house evacuated till the Christmas following, I enjoyed during the whole year the society of my aunt, without much consciousness of her impending fate. I feel a melancholy pleasure in repeating my obligations to that excellent woman, Mrs. Catherine Porten, the true mother of my mind as well as of my health. Her natural good sense was improved by the perusal of the best books in the English language; and

if her reason was sometimes clouded by prejudice, her sentiments were never disguised by hypocrisy or affectation. Her indulgent tenderness, the frankness of her temper, and my innate rising curiosity, soon removed all distance between us: like friends of an equal age, we freely conversed on every topic, familiar or abstruse; and it was her delight and reward to observe the first shoots of my young ideas. Pain and languor were often soothed by the voice of instruction and amusement; and to her kind lessons I ascribe my early and invincible love of reading, which I would not exchange for the treasures of India. I should perhaps be astonished, were it possible to ascertain the date at which a favorite tale was engraved by frequent repetition in my memory, —the Cavern of the Winds; the Palace of Felicity; and the fatal moment, at the end of three months or centuries, when Prince Adolphus is overtaken by Time, who had worn out so many pair of wings in the pursuit. Before I left Kingston School I was well acquainted with Pope's Homer and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, two books which will always please by the moving picture of human manners and specious miracles: nor was I then capable of discerning that Pope's translation is a portrait endowed with every merit excepting that of likeness to the original. The verses of Pope accustomed my ear to the sound of poetic harmony: in the death of Hector, and the shipwreck of Ulysses, I tasted the new emotions of terror and pity; and seriously disputed with my aunt on the vices and virtues of the heroes of the Trojan war. From Pope's Homer to Dryden's Virgil was an easy transition; but I know not how, from some fault in the author, the translator, or the reader, the pious Æneas did not so forcibly seize on my imagination;

and I derived more pleasure from Ovid's Metamorphoses, especially in the fall of Phaeton and the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses. My grandfather's flight unlocked the door of a tolerable library; and I turned over many English pages of poetry and romance, of history and travels. Where a title attracted my eye, without fear or awe, I snatched the volume from the shelf; and Mrs. Porten, who indulged herself in moral and religious speculations, was more prone to encourage than to check a curiosity above the strength of a boy. This year (1748), the twelfth of my age, I shall note as the most propitious to the growth of my intellectual stature.

The relics of my grandfather's fortune afforded a bare annuity for his own maintenance; and his daughter, my worthy aunt, who had already passed her fortieth year, was left destitute. Her noble spirit scorned a life of obligation and dependence; and after revolving several schemes, she preferred the humble industry of keeping a boarding-house for Westminster School,* where she laboriously earned a competence for her old age. This singular opportunity of blending the advantages of private and public education decided my father. After the Christmas holidays, in January, 1749, I accompanied Mrs. Porten to her new house in College Street, and was immediately entered in the school, of which Dr. John Nicoll was at that time head master. At first I was alone; but my aunt's resolution was praised, her character was esteemed, her friends were numerous and active. In the course of some years she became the mother of forty or fifty boys, for

* It is said in the family that she was principally induced to this undertaking by her affection for her nephew, whose weak constitution required her constant and unremitted attention. S.

the most part of family and fortune; and as her primitive habitation was too narrow, she built and occupied a spacious mansion in Dean's Yard. I shall always be ready to join in the common opinion that our public schools, which have produced so many eminent characters, are the best adapted to the genius and constitution of the English people. A boy of spirit may acquire a previous and practical experience of the world; and his playfellows may be the future friends of his heart or his interest. In a free intercourse with his equals, the habits of truth, fortitude, and prudence will insensibly be matured. Birth and riches are measured by the standard of personal merit; and the mimic scene of a rebellion has displayed, in their true colors, the ministers and patriots of the rising generation. Our seminaries of learning do not exactly correspond with the precept of a Spartan king, "that the child should be instructed in the arts which will be useful to the man"; since a finished scholar may emerge from the head of Westminster or Eton, in total ignorance of the business and conversation of English gentlemen in the latter end of the eighteenth century. But these schools may assume the merit of teaching all that they pretend to teach, the Latin and Greek languages; they deposit in the hands of a disciple the keys of two valuable chests; nor can he complain, if they are afterwards lost or neglected by his own fault. The necessity of leading in equal ranks so many unequal powers of capacity and application will prolong to eight or ten years the juvenile studies which might be despatched in half that time by the skilful master of a single pupil. Yet even the repetition of exercise and discipline contributes to fix in a vacant mind the verbal science of grammar and prosody: and the private or voluntary student, who pos-

sesses the sense and spirit of the classics, may offend by a false quantity the scrupulous ear of a well-flogged critic. For myself, I must be content with a very small share of the civil and literary fruits of a public school. In the space of two years (1749, 1750), interrupted by danger and debility, I painfully climbed into the third form; and my riper age was left to acquire the beauties of the Latin and the rudiments of the Greek tongue. Instead of audaciously mingling in the sports, the quarrels, and the connections of our little world, I was still cherished at home under the maternal wing of my aunt; and my removal from Westminster long preceded the approach of manhood.

The violence and variety of my complaints, which had excused my frequent absence from Westminster School, at length engaged Mrs. Porten, with the advice of physicians, to conduct me to Bath: at the end of the Michaelmas vacation (1750) she quitted me with reluctance, and I remained several months under the care of a trusty maid-servant. A strange nervous affection, which alternately contracted my legs and produced, without any visible symptoms, the most excruciating pain, was ineffectually opposed by the various methods of bathing and pumping. From Bath I was transported to Winchester, to the house of a physician; and after the failure of his medical skill, we had again recourse to the virtues of the Bath waters. During the intervals of these fits I moved with my father to Buriton and Putney; and a short unsuccessful trial was attempted to renew my attendance at Westminster School. But my infirmities could not be reconciled with the hours and discipline of a public seminary; and instead of a domestic tutor, who might have watched the favorable moments, and gently

advanced the progress of my learning, my father was too easily content with such occasional teachers as the different places of my residence could supply. I was never forced, and seldom was I persuaded, to admit these lessons: yet I read with a clergyman at Bath some odes of Horace and several episodes of Virgil, which gave me an imperfect and transient enjoyment of the Latin poets. It might now be apprehended that I should continue for life an illiterate cripple; but as I approached my sixteenth year, Nature displayed in my favor her mysterious energies: my constitution was fortified and fixed; and my disorders, instead of growing with my growth and strengthening with my strength, most wonderfully vanished. I have never possessed or abused the insolence of health: but since that time few persons have been more exempt from real or imaginary ills; and, till I am admonished by the gout, the reader will no more be troubled with the history of my bodily complaints. My unexpected recovery again encouraged the hope of my education; and I was placed at Esher, in Surrey, in the house of the Reverend Mr. Philip Francis, in a pleasant spot which promised to unite the various benefits of air, exercise, and study (January, 1752). The translator of Horace might have taught me to relish the Latin poets, had not my friends discovered, in a few weeks, that he preferred the pleasures of London to the instruction of his pupils. My father's perplexity at this time, rather than his prudence, was urged to embrace a singular and desperate measure. Without preparation or delay he carried me to Oxford; and I was matriculated in the university as a gentleman-commoner of Magdalen College, before I had accomplished the fifteenth year of my age (April 3, 1752).

The curiosity which had been implanted in my infant mind was still alive and active; but my reason was not sufficiently informed to understand the value, or to lament the loss, of three precious years from my entrance at Westminster to my admission at Oxford. Instead of repining at my long and frequent confinement to the chamber or the couch, I secretly rejoiced in those infirmities which delivered me from the exercises of the school and the society of my equals. As often as I was tolerably exempt from danger and pain, reading, free desultory reading, was the employment and comfort of my solitary hours. At Westminster my aunt sought only to amuse and indulge me; in my stations at Bath and Winchester, at Buriton and Putney, a false compassion respected my sufferings; and I was allowed, without control or advice, to gratify the wanderings of an unripe taste. My indiscriminate appetite subsided by degrees in the historic line; and since philosophy has exploded all innate ideas and natural propensities, I must ascribe this choice to the assiduous perusal of the Universal History, as the octavo volumes successively appeared. This unequal work, and a treatise of Hearne, the "Ductor Historicus," referred and introduced me to the Greek and Roman historians, to as many at least as were accessible to an English reader. All that I could find were greedily devoured, from Littlebury's lame Herodotus, and Spelman's valuable Xenophon, to the pompous folios of Gordon's Tacitus, and a ragged Procopius of the beginning of the last century. The cheap acquisition of so much knowledge confirmed my dislike to the study of languages; and I argued with Mrs. Porten, that were I master of Greek and Latin, I must interpret to myself in English the thoughts of the original,

and that such extemporary versions must be inferior to the elaborate translations of professed scholars; a silly sophism, which could not easily be confuted by a person ignorant of any other language than her own. From the ancient I leaped to the modern world: many crude lumps of Speed, Rapin, Mezeray, Davila, Machiavel, Father Paul, Bower, etc., I devoured like so many novels; and I swallowed with the same voracious appetite the descriptions of India and China, of Mexico and Peru.

My first introduction to the historic scenes which have since engaged so many years of my life must be ascribed to an accident. In the summer of 1751 I accompanied my father on a visit to Mr. Hoare's in Wiltshire; but I was less delighted with the beauties of Stourhead than with discovering in the library a common book, the "Continuation of Echard's Roman History," which is indeed executed with more skill and taste than the previous work. To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine were absolutely new; and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast. This transient glance served rather to irritate than to appease my curiosity; and as soon as I returned to Bath, I procured the second and third volumes of Howel's "History of the World," which exhibit the Byzantine period on a larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my attention; and some instinct of criticism directed me to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley, an original in every sense, first opened my eyes; and I was led from one book to another till I had ranged round the circle of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen, I had exhausted all that could be

learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks; and the same ardor urged me to guess at the French of D'Herbelot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock's Abulfaragius. Such vague and multifarious reading could not teach me to think, to write, or to act; and the only principle that darted a ray of light into the indigested chaos was an early and rational application to the order of time and place. The maps of Cellarius and Wells imprinted in my mind the picture of ancient geography: from Strauchius I imbibed the elements of chronology; the Tables of Helvicius and Anderson, the Annals of Usher and Prideaux, distinguished the connection of events, and engraved the multitude of names and dates in a clear and indelible series. But in the discussion of the first ages I overleaped the bounds of modesty and use. In my childish balance I presumed to weigh the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton, which I could seldom study in the originals; and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation. I arrived at Oxford with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a school-boy would have been ashamed.

At the conclusion of this first period of my life, I am tempted to enter a protest against the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years, which is echoed with so much affectation in the world. That happiness I have never known, that time I have never regretted; and were my poor aunt still alive, she would bear testimony to the early and constant uniformity of my sentiments. It will indeed be replied, that I am not a competent judge; that pleasure is

incompatible with pain ; that joy is excluded from sickness ; and that the felicity of a school-boy consists in the perpetual motion of thoughtless and playful agility, in which I was never qualified to excel. My name, it is most true, could never be enrolled among the sprightly race, the idle progeny of Eton or Westminster,

> "Who foremost might delight to cleave,
> With pliant arm, the glassy wave,
> Or urge the flying ball."

The poet may gayly describe the short hours of recreation ; but he forgets the daily tedious labors of the school, which is approached each morning with anxious and reluctant steps.

A traveller who visits Oxford or Cambridge is surprised and edified by the apparent order and tranquillity that prevail in the seats of the English Muses. In the most celebrated universities of Holland, Germany, and Italy the students, who swarm from different countries, are loosely dispersed in private lodgings at the houses of the burghers ; they dress according to their fancy and fortune ; and in the intemperate quarrels of youth and wine, their swords, though less frequently than of old, are sometimes stained with each other's blood. The use of arms is banished from our English universities ; the uniform habit of the academics, the square cap and black gown, is adapted to the civil and even the clerical profession ; and from the doctor in divinity to the undergraduate, the degrees of learning and age are externally distinguished. Instead of being scattered in a town, the students of Oxford and Cambridge are united in colleges ; their maintenance is provided at their own expense, or that of the founders ; and the stated hours of the hall and

chapel represent the discipline of a regular, and, as it were, a religious community. The eyes of the traveller are attracted by the size or beauty of the public edifices; and the principal colleges appear to be so many palaces, which a liberal nation has erected and endowed for the habitation of science. My own introduction to the University of Oxford forms a new era in my life; and at the distance of forty years I still remember my first emotions of surprise and satisfaction. In my fifteenth year I felt myself suddenly raised from a boy to a man; the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown which distinguish a gentleman-commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a school-boy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command, among the tradesmen of Oxford, an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands, which gave me the free use of a numerous and learned library: my apartments consisted of three elegant and well-furnished rooms in the new building — a stately pile — of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance (April 3, 1752) into the University of Oxford.

The expression of gratitude is a virtue and a pleasure: a liberal mind will delight to cherish and celebrate the memory of its parents; and the teachers of science are the parents of the mind. I applaud the filial piety which it is impossible for me to imitate; since I must not confess an imaginary debt, to assume

the merit of a just or generous retribution. To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life. The reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar; but I cannot affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The specious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure may doubtless be alleged; nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application: even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-constituted academy, under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors, I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science: my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness, which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

Perhaps in a separate annotation I may coolly examine the fabulous and real antiquities of our sister universities, a question which has kindled such fierce and foolish disputes among their fanatic sons. In the mean while it will be acknowledged that these venerable bodies are sufficiently old to partake of all the prejudices and infirmities of age. The schools of Ox-

ford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science; and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks; and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy. The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of the public instruction; and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive: their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival and below the confession of an error. We may scarcely hope that any reformation will be a voluntary act; and so deeply are they rooted in law and prejudice, that even the omnipotence of Parliament would shrink from an inquiry into the state and abuses of the two universities.

The use of academical degrees. as old as the thirteenth century, is visibly borrowed from the mechanic corporations, in which an apprentice, after serving his time, obtains a testimonial of his skill, and a license to practise his trade and mystery. It is not my design to depreciate those honors, which could never gratify or disappoint my ambition; and I should applaud the institution, if the degrees of bachelor or licentiate were bestowed as the reward of manly and successful study; if the name and rank of doctor or master were strictly reserved for the professors of science who have approved their title to the public esteem.

In all the universities of Europe, excepting our own, the languages and sciences are distributed among a numerous list of effective professors: the students, according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence, apply themselves to the proper masters; and in the annual repetition of public and private lectures these masters are assiduously employed. Our curiosity may inquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford (for I shall now confine myself to my own university); by whom they are appointed, and what may be the probable chances of merit or incapacity; how many are stationed to the three faculties, and how many are left for the liberal arts; what is the form, and what the substance, of their lessons. But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer, that "in the University of Oxford the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching." Incredible as the fact may appear, I must rest my belief on the positive and impartial evidence of a master of moral and political wisdom, who had himself resided at Oxford. Dr. Adam Smith assigns as the cause of their indolence that, instead of being paid by voluntary contributions, which would urge them to increase the number and to deserve the gratitude of their pupils, the Oxford professors are secure in the enjoyment of a fixed stipend, without the necessity of labor, or the apprehension of control. It has indeed been observed, nor is the observation absurd, that excepting in experimental sciences, which demand a costly apparatus and a dexterous hand, the many valuable treatises that have been published on every subject of learning may now supersede the ancient mode of oral instruction. Were this principle true in its ut-

most latitude, I should only infer that the offices and salaries which are become useless ought without delay to be abolished. But there still remains a material difference between a book and a professor; the hour of the lecture enforces attendance; attention is fixed by the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher; the most idle will carry something away; and the more diligent will compare the instructions which they have heard in the school with the volumes which they peruse in their chamber. The advice of a skilful professor will adapt a course of reading to every mind and every situation; his authority will discover, admonish, and at last chastise, the negligence of his disciples; and his vigilant inquiries will ascertain the steps of their literary progress. Whatever science he professes he may illustrate in a series of discourses, composed in the leisure of his closet, pronounced on public occasions, and finally delivered to the press.

The College of St. Mary Magdalen was founded in the fifteenth century by Wainfleet, Bishop of Winchester; and now consists of a president, forty fellows, and a number of inferior students. It is esteemed one of the largest and most wealthy of our academical corporations, which may be compared to the Benedictine abbeys of Catholic countries; and I have loosely heard that the estates belonging to Magdalen College, which are leased by those indulgent landlords at small quit-rents and occasional fines, might be raised, in the hands of private avarice, to an annual revenue of nearly thirty thousand pounds. Our colleges are supposed to be schools of science, as well as of education; nor is it unreasonable to expect that a body of literary men, devoted to a life of celibacy, exempt from the

care of their own subsistence, and amply provided with books, should devote their leisure to the prosecution of study, and that some effects of their studies should be manifested to the world. The shelves of their library groan under the weight of the Benedictine folios, of the editions of the fathers, and the collections of the Middle Ages which have issued from the single abbey of St. Germain de Préz at Paris. A composition of genius must be the offspring of one mind; but such works of industry as may be divided among many hands, and must be continued during many years, are the peculiar province of a laborious community. If I inquire into the manufactures of the monks of Magdalen, if I extend the inquiry to the other colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, a silent blush or a scornful frown will be the only reply. The fellows or monks of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder: their days were filled by a series of uniform employments, — the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading or thinking or writing they had absolved their consciences; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman-commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal; their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of

Hanover. A general election was now approaching: the great Oxfordshire contest already blazed with all the malevolence of party zeal. Magdalen College was devotedly attached to the old interest; and the names of Wenman and Dashwood were more frequently pronounced than those of Cicero and Chrysostom. The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the undergraduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation; and I cannot describe, as I never knew, the discipline of college. Some duties may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honors of a fellowship (*ascribi quietis ordinibus . . . . Deorum*); but no independent members were admitted below the rank of a gentleman-commoner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty. A tradition prevailed that some of our predecessors had spoken Latin declamations in the hall; but of this ancient custom no vestige remained; the obvious methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown; and I have never heard that either the president or the society interfered in the private economy of the tutors and their pupils.

The silence of the Oxford professors, which deprives the youth of public instruction, is imperfectly supplied by the tutors, as they are styled, of the several colleges. Instead of confining themselves to a single science, which had satisfied the ambition of Burman or Bernoulli, they teach, or promise to teach, either history or mathematics or ancient literature or moral philosophy; and as it is possible that they may be defective in all, it is highly probable that of some they will be ignorant. They are paid indeed by private contributions, but their appointment depends on the head of the house: their diligence is voluntary, and

will consequently be languid, while the pupils themselves, or their parents, are not indulged in the liberty of choice or change. The first tutor into whose hands I was resigned appears to have been one of the best of the tribe: Dr. Waldegrave was a learned and pious man, of a mild disposition, strict morals, and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or the jollity of the college. But his knowledge of the world was confined to the university; his learning was of the last rather than of the present age; his temper was indolent; his faculties, which were not of the first rate, had been relaxed by the climate; and he was satisfied, like his fellows, with the slight and superficial discharge of an important trust. As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his disciple in school-learning, he proposed that we should read, every morning from ten to eleven, the comedies of Terence. The sum of my improvement in the University of Oxford is confined to three or four Latin plays; and even the study of an elegant classic, which might have been illustrated by a comparison of ancient and modern theatres, was reduced to a dry and literal interpretation of the author's text. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence: the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was

a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and at the most precious season of youth whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse without labor or amusement, without advice or account. I should have listened to the voice of reason and of my tutor; his mild behavior had gained my confidence. I preferred his society to that of the younger students; and in our evening walks to the top of Heddington Hill we freely conversed on a variety of subjects. Since the days of Pocock and Hyde, Oriental learning has always been the pride of Oxford, and I once expressed an inclination to study Arabic. His prudence discouraged this childish fancy; but he neglected the fair occasion of directing the ardor of a curious mind. During my absence in the summer vacation Dr. Waldegrave accepted a college living at Washington in Sussex, and on my return I no longer found him at Oxford. From that time I have lost sight of my first tutor; but at the end of thirty years (1781) he was still alive, and the practice of exercise and temperance had entitled him to a healthy old age.

The long recess between the Trinity and Michaelmas terms empties the colleges of Oxford, as well as the courts of Westminster. I spent, at my father's house at Buriton in Hampshire, the two months of August and September. It is whimsical enough, that as soon as I left Magdalen College, my taste for books began to revive; but it was the same blind and boyish taste for the pursuit of exotic history. Unprovided with original learning, unformed in the habits of thinking, unskilled in the arts of composition, I resolved — to write a book. The title of this first essay, "The Age of Sesostris," was perhaps suggested by Voltaire's

"Age of Louis XIV.," which was new and popular; but my sole object was to investigate the probable date of the life and reign of the conqueror of Asia. I was then enamored of Sir John Marsham's "Canon Chronicus"; an elaborate work, of whose merits and defects I was not yet qualified to judge. According to this specious though narrow plan, I settled my hero about the time of Solomon, in the tenth century before the Christian era. It was therefore incumbent on me, unless I would adopt Sir Isaac Newton's shorter chronology, to remove a formidable objection; and my solution, for a youth of fifteen, is not devoid of ingenuity. In his version of the sacred books, Manetho the high-priest has identified Sethosis, or Sesostris, with the elder brother of Danaus, who landed in Greece, according to the Parian Marble, fifteen hundred and ten years before Christ. But in my supposition the high-priest is guilty of a voluntary error; flattery is the prolific parent of falsehood. Manetho's "History of Egypt" is dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who derived a fabulous or illegitimate pedigree from the Macedonian kings of the race of Hercules. Danaus is the ancestor of Hercules; and after the failure of the elder branch, his descendants, the Ptolemies, are the sole representatives of the royal family, and may claim by inheritance the kingdom which they hold by conquest. Such were my juvenile discoveries; at a riper age, I no longer presume to connect the Greek, the Jewish, and the Egyptian antiquities, which are lost in a distant cloud. Nor is this the only instance in which the belief and knowledge of the child are superseded by the more rational ignorance of the man. During my stay at Buriton my infant labor was diligently prosecuted, without much interruption

from company or country diversions; and I already heard the music of public applause. The discovery of my own weakness was the first symptom of taste. On my return to Oxford, "The Age of Sesostris" was wisely relinquished; but the imperfect sheets remained twenty years at the bottom of a drawer, till, in a general clearance of papers (November, 1772), they were committed to the flames.

After the departure of Dr. Waldegrave, I was transferred, with his other pupils, to his academical heir, whose literary character did not command the respect of the college. Dr. —— well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform. Instead of guiding the studies, and watching over the behavior of his disciple, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and, excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other. The want of experience, of advice, and of occupation soon betrayed me into some improprieties of conduct, ill-chosen company, late hours, and inconsiderate expense. My growing debts might be secret; but my frequent absence was visible and scandalous, and a tour to Bath, a visit into Buckinghamshire, and four excursions to London, in the same winter, were costly and dangerous frolics. They were, indeed, without a meaning, as without an excuse. The irksomeness of a cloistered life repeatedly tempted me to wander; but my chief pleasure was that of travelling; and I was too young and bashful to enjoy, like a manly Oxonian in town, the pleasures of London. In all these excursions I eloped from Oxford; I returned to college: in a few days I

eloped again, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, without once hearing the voice of admonition, without once feeling the hand of control. Yet my time was lost, my expenses were multiplied, my behavior abroad was unknown; folly as well as vice should have awakened the attention of my superiors, and my tender years would have justified a more than ordinary degree of restraint and discipline.

It might at least be expected that an ecclesiastical school should inculcate the orthodox principles of religion. But our venerable mother had contrived to unite the opposite extremes of bigotry and indifference: an heretic or unbeliever was a monster in her eyes; but she was always or often or sometimes remiss in the spiritual education of her own children. According to the statutes of the university, every student, before he is matriculated, must subscribe his assent to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, which are signed by more than read, and read by more than believe them. My insufficient age excused me, however, from the immediate performance of this legal ceremony; and the vice-chancellor directed me to return as soon as I should have accomplished my fifteenth year; recommending me, in the mean while, to the instruction of my college. My college forgot to instruct; I forgot to return, and was myself forgotten by the first magistrate of the university. Without a single lecture, either public or private, either Christian or Protestant, without any academical subscription, without any episcopal confirmation, I was left by the dim light of my catechism to grope my way to the chapel and communion-table, where I was admitted without a question how far, or by what means, I might be qualified to receive the sacrament. Such

almost incredible neglect was productive of the worst mischiefs. From my childhood I had been fond of religious disputation: my poor aunt has been often puzzled by the mysteries which she strove to believe; nor had the elastic spring been totally broken by the weight of the atmosphere of Oxford. The blind activity of idleness urged me to advance without armor into the dangerous mazes of controversy; and at the age of sixteen I bewildered myself into the errors of the Church of Rome.

The progress of my conversion may tend to illustrate, at least, the history of my own mind. It was not long since Dr. Middleton's "Free Inquiry" had sounded an alarm in the theological world: much ink and much gall had been spilt in the defence of the primitive miracles; and the two dullest of their champions were crowned with academic honors by the University of Oxford. The name of Middleton was unpopular; and his proscription very naturally led me to peruse his writings and those of his antagonists. His bold criticism, which approaches the precipice of infidelity, produced on my mind a singular effect; and had I persevered in the communion of Rome, I should now apply to my own fortune the prediction of the Sibyl,

"Via prima salutis,
Quod minimè reris, Graiâ, pandetur ab urbe."

The elegance of style and freedom of argument were repelled by a shield of prejudice. I still revered the character, or rather the names, of the saints and fathers whom Dr. Middleton exposes; nor could he destroy my implicit belief that the gift of miraculous powers was continued in the church during the first four or five centuries of Christianity. But I was unable to resist

the weight of historical evidence that within the same period most of the leading doctrines of Popery were already introduced in theory and practice; nor was my conclusion absurd, — that miracles are the test of truth, and that the church must be orthodox and pure, which was so often approved by the visible interposition of the Deity. The marvellous tales which are so boldly attested by the Basils and Chrysostoms, the Augustins and Jeromes, compelled me to embrace the superior merits of celibacy, the institution of the monastic life, the use of the sign of the cross, of holy oil, and even of images, the invocation of saints, the worship of relics, the rudiments of purgatory in prayers for the dead, and the tremendous mystery of the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which insensibly swelled into the prodigy of transubstantiation. In these dispositions, and already more than half a convert, I formed an unlucky intimacy with a young gentleman of our college. With a character less resolute, Mr. Molesworth had imbibed the same religious opinions; and some Popish books, I know not through what channel, were conveyed into his possession. I read, I applauded, I believed; the English translation of two famous works of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the "Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine," and the "History of the Protestant Variations," achieved my conversion; and I surely fell by a noble hand.* I have since examined the originals with a more discerning eye, and shall not hesitate to pronounce that Bossuet is indeed a master of all the weapons of controversy. In the Exposition, a specious apology, the orator assumes, with consummate art, the

* Mr. Gibbon never talked with me on the subject of his conversion to Popery but once; and then he imputed his change to the works of Parsons the Jesuit, who lived in the reign of Elizabeth, and who, he said, had urged all the best arguments in favor of the Roman Catholic religion. S.

tone of candor and simplicity; and the ten-horned monster is transformed, at his magic touch, into the milk-white hind who must be loved as soon as she is seen. In the History, a bold and well-aimed attack, he displays, with a happy mixture of narrative and argument, the faults and follies, the changes and contradictions, of our first reformers; whose variations (as he dexterously contends) are the mark of historical error, while the perpetual unity of the Catholic Church is the sign and test of infallible truth. To my present feelings it seems incredible that I should ever believe that I believed in transubstantiation. But my conqueror oppressed me with the sacramental words, "Hoc est corpus meum," and dashed against each other the figurative half-meanings of the Protestant sects: every objection was resolved into omnipotence; and after repeating at St. Mary's the Athanasian creed, I humbly acquiesced in the mystery of the real presence.

"To take up half on trust, and half to try,
Name it not faith, but bungling bigotry.
Both knave and fool the merchant we may call,
To pay great sums, and to compound the small:
For who would break with Heaven, and would not break for all?"

No sooner had I settled my new religion, than I resolved to profess myself a Catholic. Youth is sincere and impetuous; and a momentary glow of enthusiasm had raised me above all temporal considerations.*

By the keen Protestants, who would gladly retaliate the example of persecution, a clamor is raised of the increase of Popery: and they are always loud to declaim against the toleration of priests and Jesuits, who per-

* He described the letter to his father, announcing his conversion, as written with all the pomp, the dignity, and self-satisfaction of a martyr. S.

vert so many of his majesty's subjects from their religion and allegiance. On the present occasion the fall of one or more of her sons directed this clamor against the university; and it was confidently affirmed that Popish missionaries were suffered, under various disguises, to introduce themselves into the colleges of Oxford. But justice obliges me to declare that, as far as relates to myself, this assertion is false; and that I never conversed with a priest, or even with a Papist, till my resolution from books was absolutely fixed. In my last excursion to London I addressed myself to Mr. Lewis, a Roman Catholic bookseller in Russell Street, Covent Garden, who recommended me to a priest, of whose name and order I am at present ignorant.* In our first interview he soon discovered that persuasion was needless. After sounding the motives and merits of my conversion, he consented to admit me into the pale of the church; and at his feet, on the 8th of June, 1753, I solemnly, though privately, abjured the errors of heresy. The seduction of an English youth of family and fortune was an act of as much danger as glory; but he bravely overlooked the danger, of which I was not then sufficiently informed. "Where a person is reconciled to the see of Rome, or procures others to be reconciled, the offence," says Blackstone, "amounts to high treason." And if the humanity of the age would prevent the execution of this sanguinary statute, there were other laws of a less odious cast, which condemned the priest to perpetual imprisonment, and transferred the proselyte's estate to his nearest relation. An elaborate controversial epistle, approved by my director, and

* His name was Baker, a Jesuit, and one of the chaplains of the Sardinian ambassador. Mr. Gibbon's conversion made some noise; and Mr. Lewis, the Roman Catholic bookseller of Russell Street, Covent Garden, was summoned before the privy council, and interrogated on the subject. This was communicated by Mr. Lewis's son. 1814.

addressed to my father, announced and justified the step which I had taken. My father was neither a bigot nor a philosopher; but his affection deplored the loss of an only son, and his good sense was astonished at my strange departure from the religion of my country. In the first sally of passion he divulged a secret which prudence might have suppressed, and the gates of Magdalen College were forever shut against my return. Many years afterwards, when the name of Gibbon was become as notorious as that of Middleton, it was industriously whispered at Oxford, that the historian had formerly "turned Papist"; my character stood exposed to the reproach of inconstancy; and this invidious topic would have been handled without mercy by my opponents, could they have separated my cause from that of the university. For my own part, I am proud of an honest sacrifice of interest to conscience. I can never blush, if my tender mind was entangled in the sophistry that seduced the acute and manly understandings of Chillingworth and Bayle, who afterwards emerged from superstition to scepticism.

The academical resentment which I may possibly have provoked will prudently spare this plain narrative of my studies, or rather of my idleness, and of the unfortunate event which shortened the term of my residence at Oxford. But it may be suggested that my father was unlucky in the choice of a society and the chance of a tutor. It will perhaps be asserted that in the lapse of forty years many improvements have taken place in the college and in the university. I am not unwilling to believe that some tutors might have been found more active than Dr. Waldegrave, and less contemptible than Dr. ——. At a more recent period many students have been attracted by the merit

and reputation of Sir William Scott, then a tutor in University College, and now conspicuous in the profession of the civil law: my personal acquaintance with that gentleman has inspired me with a just esteem for his abilities and knowledge; and I am assured that his lectures on history would compose, were they given to the public, a most valuable treatise. Under the auspices of the late deans a more regular discipline has been introduced, as I am told, at Christ Church; a course of classical and philosophical studies is proposed, and even pursued, in that numerous seminary; learning has been made a duty, a pleasure, and even a fashion; and several young gentlemen do honor to the college in which they have been educated. According to the will of the donor, the profit of the second part of Lord Clarendon's History has been applied to the establishment of a riding-school, that the polite exercises might be taught, I know not with what success, in the university. The Vinerian professorship is of far more serious importance; the laws of his country are the first science of an Englishman of rank and fortune, who is called to be a magistrate, and may hope to be a legislator. This judicious institution was coldly entertained by the graver doctors, who complained (I have heard the complaint) that it would take the young people from their books: but Mr. Viner's benefaction is not unprofitable, since it has at least produced the excellent commentaries of Sir William Blackstone.

After carrying me to Putney, to the house of his friend Mr. Mallet,* by whose philosophy I was rather

* The author of a Life of Bacon, which has been rated above its value; of some forgotten poems and plays; and of the pathetic ballad of William and Margaret. His tenets were deistical; perhaps a stronger term might have been used. S.

scandalized than reclaimed, it was necessary for my father to form a new plan of education, and to devise some method which, if possible, might effect the cure of my spiritual malady. After much debate it was determined, from the advice and personal experience of Mr. Eliot (now Lord Eliot), to fix me, during some years, at Lausanne in Switzerland. Mr. Frey, a Swiss gentleman of Basil, undertook the conduct of the journey: we left London the 19th of June, crossed the sea from Dover to Calais, travelled post through several provinces of France, by the direct road of St. Quentin, Rheims, Langres, and Besançon, and arrived, the 30th of June, at Lausanne, where I was immediately settled under the roof and tuition of Mr. Pavilliard, a Calvinist minister.

The first marks of my father's displeasure rather astonished than afflicted me: when he threatened to banish and disown and disinherit a rebellious son, I cherished a secret hope that he would not be able or willing to effect his menaces; and the pride of conscience encouraged me to sustain the honorable and important part which I was now acting. My spirits were raised and kept alive by the rapid motion of my journey, the new and various scenes of the Continent, and the civility of Mr. Frey, a man of sense, who was not ignorant of books or the world. But after he had resigned me into Pavilliard's hands, and I was fixed in my new habitation, I had leisure to contemplate the strange and melancholy prospect before me. My first complaint arose from my ignorance of the language. In my childhood I had once studied the French grammar, and I could imperfectly understand the easy prose of a familiar subject. But when I was thus suddenly cast on a foreign land, I found myself deprived of the

use of speech and of hearing, and, during some weeks, incapable not only of enjoying the pleasures of conversation, but even of asking or answering a question in the common intercourse of life. To a home-bred Englishman every object, every custom, was offensive; but the native of any country might have been disgusted with the general aspect of his lodging and entertainment. I had now exchanged my elegant apartment in Magdalen College for a narrow, gloomy street, the most unfrequented of an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber, ill-contrived and ill-furnished, which, on the approach of winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull, invisible heat of a stove. From a man I was again degraded to the dependence of a school-boy. Mr. Pavilliard managed my expenses, which had been reduced to a diminutive state. I received a small monthly allowance for my pocket-money; and, helpless and awkward as I have ever been, I no longer enjoyed the indispensable comfort of a servant. My condition seemed as destitute of hope as it was devoid of pleasure: I was separated for an indefinite, which appeared an infinite, term from my native country; and I had lost all connection with my Catholic friends. I have since reflected with surprise that, as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith. Such was my first introduction to Lausanne; a place where I spent nearly five years with pleasure and profit, which I afterwards revisited without compulsion, and which I have finally selected

as the most grateful retreat for the decline of my life.

But it is the peculiar felicity of youth that the most unpleasing objects and events seldom make a deep or lasting impression; it forgets the past, enjoys the present, and anticipates the future. At the flexible age of sixteen I soon learned to endure, and gradually to adopt, the new forms of arbitrary manners: the real hardships of my situation were alienated by time. Had I been sent abroad in a more splendid style, such as the fortune and bounty of my father might have supplied, I might have returned home with the same stock of language and science which our countrymen usually import from the Continent. An exile and a prisoner as I was, their example betrayed me into some irregularities of wine, of play, and of idle excursions; but I soon felt the impossibility of associating with them on equal terms; and after the departure of my first acquaintances, I held a cold and civil correspondence with their successors. This seclusion from English society was attended with the most solid benefits. In the Pays de Vaud the French language is used with less imperfection than in most of the distant provinces of France: in Pavilliard's family necessity compelled me to listen and to speak; and if I was at first disheartened by the apparent slowness, in a few months I was astonished by the rapidity, of my progress. My pronunciation was formed by the constant repetition of the same sounds; the variety of words and idioms, the rules of grammar and distinctions of genders, were impressed in my memory; ease and freedom were obtained by practice, correctness and elegance by labor; and before I was recalled home, French, in which I spontaneously thought, was more familiar than English to

my ear, my tongue, and my pen. The first effect of this opening knowledge was the revival of my love of reading, which had been chilled at Oxford; and I soon turned over, without much choice, almost all the French books in my tutor's library. Even these amusements were productive of real advantage: my taste and judgment were now somewhat riper. I was introduced to a new mode of style and literature; by the comparison of manners and opinions, my views were enlarged, my prejudices were corrected; and a copious voluntary abstract of the "Histoire de l'Église et de l'Empire," by Le Suer, may be placed in a middle line between my childish and my manly studies. As soon as I was able to converse with the natives, I began to feel some satisfaction in their company; my awkward timidity was polished and emboldened, and I frequented, for the first time, assemblies of men and women. The acquaintance of the Pavilliards prepared me by degrees for more elegant society. I was received with kindness and indulgence in the best families of Lausanne; and it was in one of these that I formed an intimate and lasting connection with Mr. Deyverdun, a young man of an amiable temper and excellent understanding. In the arts of fencing and dancing small indeed was my proficiency; and some months were idly wasted in the riding-school. My unfitness to bodily exercise reconciled me to a sedentary life; and the horse, the favorite of my countrymen, never contributed to the pleasures of my youth.

My obligations to the lessons of Mr. Pavilliard, gratitude will not suffer me to forget; he was endowed with a clear head and a warm heart; his innate benevolence had assuaged the spirit of the church; he was rational, because he was moderate; in the course

of his studies he had acquired a just though superficial knowledge of most branches of literature; by long practice he was skilled in the arts of teaching; and he labored with assiduous patience to know the character, gain the affection, and open the mind of his English pupil.* As soon as we began to understand each

* *Extract of a Letter from* MR. PAVILLIARD *to* EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

LAUSANNE, 31st October, 1753.

SIR: — Since my letter of the 15th August, I received on the 18th of the same month the letter which you did me the honor to write, of the date of the 24th July. Having read it with attention, allow me to represent to you the reflections which have occurred to me.

You desire that your son should go out little, but be retained within doors, and obliged to occupy himself in his studies. You are his parent, sir, and consequently have a right to prescribe the manner in which he should be treated. Without doubt you select this course because you think that it will succeed better in removing the prejudices to which he has resigned himself. I beg you, however, to consider that your son is of a serious character, that he is fond of reflection, and that, being so much in his chamber employed in reading, he will follow his own ideas exclusively, to which he will be the more attached, as there will be no one to contradict him; moreover, regarding the obligation as a species of restraint imposed upon him, he will be less inclined to listen to what I shall say to him, and will regard all my conversation as coming from a man who entertains notions which he disapproves, and who is paid for endeavoring to make him of the same opinion.

I believe, sir, that it would be more advisable for him to unbend a little, and seek additional amusement, in order to dissipate a portion of the too great gravity of his character. By seeing good company he would learn what is deemed correct in regard to a variety of subjects; he would be accustomed to contradiction and to the necessity of occasionally yielding, and would thereby be led to examine, with serious care and with less preoccupation, the principles which he adopts. Often finding them condemned by persons whom he will see evince a solicitude to be correct, he will not regard them as infallible; and convinced that they who differ from him do not dislike him for his opinions, he will listen to them with more confidence. All that I have just said has been suggested by my observations on his character, and my consideration of what you have done me the honor to say in your letter. Having perceived that he was attached to the party of the Pretender, which he openly acknowledged in the sequel, I have combated his opinions, without seeming to regard them as entertained by him, and without exhibiting any intention to annoy him. He has frequently replied; but I have finally so repelled his

other, he gently led me, from a blind and undistinguished love of reading, into the path of instruction. I consented with pleasure that a portion of the morning hours should be consecrated to a plan of modern history and geography, and to the critical perusal of the French and Latin classics; and at each step I felt myself invigorated by the habits of application and method. His prudence repressed and dissembled some youthful sallies; and as soon as I was confirmed in the habits of industry and temperance, he gave the reins into my own hands. His favorable report of my behavior and progress gradually obtained some latitude of action and expense; and he wished to alleviate the hardships of my lodging and entertainment. The principles of philosophy were associated with the examples of taste; and by a singular chance, the book, as well as the man, which contributed the most effectually to my education, has a stronger claim on my gratitude than on my admiration. M. de Crousaz, the adversary of Bayle and Pope, is not distinguished by lively fancy or profound reflection; and even in his own country, at the end of a few years, his name and writings are almost obliterated. But his philosophy had been formed in the school of Locke, his divinity in that of Limborch and Le Clerc; in a long and laborious life, several generations of pupils were taught to think and even to write; his lessons rescued the Academy of Lausanne from Calvinistic prejudice; and he had the rare merit of diffusing a more liberal spirit among the clergy and people

arguments, that he speaks no more in this strain, and expresses himself very differently in relation to the king from what he did formerly. I am not sure, however, that his opinions are altogether changed, as he speaks little, and I have never wished him to think that I had any design to dictate to or overrule him.

Sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

PAVILLIARD, *Pastor.*

of the Pays de Vaud. His system of logic, which in the last edition has swelled to six tedious and prolix volumes, may be praised as a clear and methodical abridgment of the art of reasoning, from our simple ideas to the most complex operations of the human understanding. This system I studied, and meditated, and abstracted, till I obtained the free command of an universal instrument, which I soon presumed to exercise on my Catholic opinions. Pavilliard was not unmindful that his first task, his most important duty, was to reclaim me from the errors of Popery. The intermixture of sects has rendered the Swiss clergy acute and learned on the topics of controversy; and I have some of his letters in which he celebrates the dexterity of his attack, and my gradual concessions after a firm and well-managed defence.* I was willing, and I am now willing, to allow him a handsome share of the honor of my conversion; yet I must observe that it was principally effected by my private reflections; and I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a philosophical argument against the doctrine of transubstantiation, — that the text of scripture which seems to inculcate the real presence is attested only by a single sense, — our sight; while the real presence itself is disproved by three of our senses, — the sight, the touch, and the taste. The various articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream; and after a full conviction, on Christmas Day, 1754, I received the sacrament in the church of Lausanne. It was here

* Mr. Pavilliard has described to me the astonishment with which he gazed on Mr. Gibbon standing before him; a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favor of Popery. Mr. Gibbon many years ago became very fat and corpulent, but he had uncommonly small bones, and was very slightly made. S.

that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries which are adopted by the general consent of Catholics and Protestants.*

* *From* Mr. Pavilliard *to* Edward Gibbon, Esq.

June 26, 1754.

Sir, — I hope that you will pardon my long silence, in consideration of the news which I have to communicate. If I have delayed, it has been neither through forgetfulness nor negligence; but I have thought, week after week, that I should have the power to announce that your son had entirely given up the false notions which he had embraced; but he has disputed the ground foot to foot; and I have not found him a man of levity, who passes with rapidity from one opinion to another. After having overthrown his arguments upon a point, so that he has had nothing to reply, he has confessed it without equivocation, and told me that he had nothing further to say. On these occasions I have not deemed it expedient to push matters to extremities, and to extort from him anything which his heart might secretly disavow; but have given him time to reflect, and placed all my books at his disposal. When he allowed that he had studied the subject as fully as possible, I returned to the charge, and ultimately I have caused the truth to prevail.

I had been led to believe that if I could demonstrate the principal errors of the Church of Rome, I could make him perceive that the minor ones ought to follow, as not of a nature to exist after the overthrow of fundamentals; but, as I have already observed, I deceived myself, as he thought himself called upon to examine every article thoroughly. By God's assistance I have not, however, lost my labor; and at present, if even he retains some remains of his pernicious errors, I can venture to say that he is no longer a member of the Church of Rome. Here then we are at present.

I have overthrown the infallibility of the church; I have proved that St. Peter was never chief of the apostles; that if he had been so, the Pope is not his successor; that it is doubtful if St. Peter was ever at Rome; but, supposing he had been there, he was never its bishop; that transubstantiation is a human invention of little antiquity in the church; that the worship of the eucharist and the withholding of the cup are contrary to the Word of God; that there are saints, but we know not who they are and therefore cannot pray to them; that the respect and worship paid to relics are condemnable; that there is no purgatory, and that the doctrine of indulgences is false; that Lent, and the fasts of Friday and Saturday, are now ridiculous in the manner prescribed by the Church of Rome; and that the imputations of that church, when it

Such, from my arrival at Lausanne, during the first eighteen or twenty months (July, 1753, to March, 1755) were my useful studies, the foundation of all my future improvements. But every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first

accuses us of varying our opinions, and following reformers of scandalous conduct and manners, are entirely ungrounded.

You will be aware, Sir, that these points imply a lengthy discussion, and that Mr. Gibbon required time to reflect upon my arguments, and to meditate replies. I have often inquired if my proofs and reasoning appeared to him convincing; and he has also answered yes in such a manner, that I can venture to assert, as I have said to your son himself, that he is no longer a Roman Catholic. Having obtained the victory thus far, I flatter myself, by God's help, to be equally successful over what remains. Thus I rely, that in a little time the work will be accomplished; I must not neglect to add, that although I have found Mr. Gibbon very firm in his opinions, I have also found him reasonable; he has yielded to conviction when it reached him, and is not what is termed a caviller. In relation to the fast of Friday and Saturday, a long time after I had written to you that he had never signified he would observe it, I perceived one Friday, towards the commencement of the month of March, that he ate no meat. I particularly addressed him to learn the reason, fearing that it was owing to indisposition; he replied that he refrained intentionally, as he held himself obliged to conform to the practice of a church of which he was a member. We then conversed upon the subject, when he assured me that he regarded it merely as a good practice, and one that he ought to follow, but not as holy in itself or of divine institution. I did not think that I ought to insist further upon this point at the time, or feel it necessary to call upon him to act against his own sense of propriety. I have since assailed this observance, which is certainly one of the least importance, and the least founded; it has nevertheless occupied much time to undeceive and to convince him that it is wrong to subject himself to the practice of a church which he no longer deems infallible; that if even this observance had some utility when instituted, it had none in itself, since it contributed nothing to purity of manners, and consequently there was nothing either in the institution of the practice, or in the practice itself, which authorized a submission to it; that at present it was a mere affair of money-getting, since with money dispensations to eat meat, etc., might always be obtained. In this manner I have restored him to Christian liberty for some weeks past, but not without considerable trouble. I have requested him to write to you an account of his present sentiments, and the state of his health, and believe that he has done so.

from his teacher; the second, more personal and important, from himself. He will not, like the fanatics of the last age, define the moment of grace; but he cannot forget the era of his life in which his mind has expanded to its proper form and dimensions. My worthy tutor had the good sense and modesty to discern how far he could be useful; as soon as he felt that I advanced beyond his speed and measure, he wisely left me to my genius; and the hours of lesson were soon lost in the voluntary labor of the whole morning, and sometimes of the whole day. The desire of prolonging my time gradually confirmed the salutary habit of early rising, to which I have always adhered, with some regard to seasons and situations; but it is happy for my eyes and my health, that my temperate ardor has never been seduced to trespass on the hours of the night. During the last three years of my residence at Lausanne, I may assume the merit of serious and solid application; but I am tempted to distinguish the last eight months of the year 1755 as the period of the most extraordinary diligence and rapid progress.* In my French and Latin translations I adopted an ex-

* JOURNAL, *December*, 1755.— In finishing this year, I must remark how favorable it was to my studies. In the space of eight months from the beginning of April, I learned the principles of drawing, made myself complete master of the French and Latin languages, with which I was very superficially acquainted before, and wrote and translated a great deal in both; read Cicero's Epistles ad Familiares, his Brutus, all his Orations, his Dialogues de Amicitiâ and de Senectute, Terence twice, and Pliny's Epistles. In French, Giannone's History of Naples, and l'Abbé Bannier's Mythology, and M. de Boehat's Mémoires sur la Suisse, and wrote a very ample relation of my tour. I likewise began to study Greek, and went through the grammar. I began to make very large collections of what I read. But what I esteem most of all, from the perusal and meditation of De Crousaz's Logic, I not only understood the principles of that science, but formed my mind to a habit of thinking and reasoning I had no idea of before.

cellent method, which, for my own success, I would recommend to the imitation of students. I chose some classic writer, such as Cicero and Vertot, the most approved for purity and elegance of style. I translated, for instance, an epistle of Cicero into French; and after throwing it aside till the words and phrases were obliterated from my memory, I retranslated my French into such Latin as I could find, and then compared each sentence of my imperfect version with the ease, the grace, the propriety, of the Roman orator. A similar experiment was made on several pages of the revolutions of Vertot; I turned them into Latin, returned them, after a sufficient interval, into my own French, and again scrutinized the resemblance or dissimilitude of the copy and the original. By degrees I was less ashamed, by degrees I was more satisfied with myself; and I persevered in the practice of these double translations, which filled several books, till I had acquired the knowledge of both idioms, and the command at least of a correct style. This useful exercise of writing was accompanied and succeeded by the more pleasing occupation of reading the best authors. The perusal of the Roman classics was at once my exercise and reward. Dr. Middleton's History, which I then appreciated above its true value, naturally directed me to the writings of Cicero. The most perfect editions — that of Olivet, which may adorn the shelves of the rich; that of Ernesti, which should lie on the table of the learned — were not within my reach. For the familiar epistles I used the text and English commentary of Bishop Ross; but my general edition was that of Verburgius, published at Amsterdam in two large volumes in folio, with an indifferent choice of various notes. I read, with application and pleasure, *all* the

epistles, all the orations, and the most important treatises of rhetoric and philosophy; and as I read, I applauded the observation of Quintilian, that every student may judge of his own proficiency by the satisfaction which he receives from the Roman orator. I tasted the beauties of language, I breathed the spirit of freedom, and I imbibed from his precepts and examples the public and private sense of a man. Cicero in Latin, and Xenophon in Greek, are indeed the two ancients whom I would first propose to a liberal scholar; not only for the merit of their style and sentiments, but for the admirable lessons which may be applied almost to every situation of public and private life. Cicero's Epistles may in particular afford the models of every form of correspondence, from the careless effusions of tenderness and friendship to the well-guarded declaration of discreet and dignified resentment. After finishing this great author, a library of eloquence and reason, I formed a more extensive plan of reviewing the Latin classics,* under the four divisions of, 1, historians; 2, poets; 3, orators; and 4, philosophers; in a chronological series, from the days of Plautus and Sallust to the decline of the language and empire of Rome: and this plan, in the last twenty-seven months of my residence at Lausanne (January, 1756, to April, 1758), I *nearly* accomplished. Nor was this review, however rapid, either hasty or superficial. I indulged myself in a second and even a third perusal of Terence, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, etc., and studied to imbibe the sense and spirit most congenial to my own. I never suffered

* JOURNAL, *January*, 1756. — I determined to read over the Latin authors in order; and read this year Virgil, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Justin, Florus, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius. I also read and meditated Locke upon the Understanding.

a difficult or corrupt passage to escape till I had viewed it in every light of which it was susceptible; though often disappointed, I always consulted the most learned or ingenious commentators, Torrentius and Dacier on Horace, Catrou and Servius on Virgil, Lipsius on Tacitus, Meziriac on Ovid, etc.; and in the ardor of my inquiries I embraced a large circle of historical and critical erudition. My abstracts of each book were made in the French language: my observations often branched into particular essays; and I can still read without contempt a dissertation of eight folio pages on eight lines (287–294) of the fourth Georgic of Virgil. Mr. Deyverdun, my friend, whose name will be frequently repeated, had joined with equal zeal, though not with equal perseverance, in the same undertaking. To him every thought, every composition, was instantly communicated; with him I enjoyed the benefits of a free conversation on the topics of our common studies.

But it is scarcely possible for a mind endowed with any active curiosity to be long conversant with the Latin classics without aspiring to know the Greek originals whom they celebrate as their masters, and of whom they so warmly recommend the study and imitation.

"Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ."

It was now that I regretted the early years which had been wasted in sickness or idleness or mere idle reading; that I condemned the perverse method of our schoolmasters, who, by first teaching the mother language, might descend with so much ease and perspicuity to the origin and etymology of a derivative idiom. In the nineteenth year of my age I determined to supply this defect; and the lessons of Pavilliard again

contributed to smooth the entrance of the way, the Greek alphabet, the grammar, and the pronunciation according to the French accent. At my earnest request we presumed to open the Iliad; and I had the pleasure of beholding, though darkly and through a glass, the true image of Homer, whom I had long since admired in an English dress. After my tutor had left me to myself, I worked my way through about half the Iliad, and afterwards interpreted alone a large portion of Xenophon and Herodotus. But my ardor, destitute of aid and emulation, was gradually cooled; and, from the barren task of searching words in a lexicon, I withdrew to the free and familiar conversation of Virgil and Tacitus. Yet in my residence at Lausanne I had laid a solid foundation, which enabled me, in a more propitious season, to prosecute the study of Grecian literature.

From a blind idea of the usefulness of such abstract science, my father had been desirous, and even pressing, that I should devote some time to the mathematics; nor could I refuse to comply with so reasonable a wish. During two winters I attended the private lectures of Monsieur de Traytorrens, who explained the elements of algebra and geometry as far as the conic sections of the Marquis de l'Hôpital, and appeared satisfied with my diligence and improvement. But as my childish propensity for numbers and calculations was totally extinct, I was content to receive the passive impression of my professor's lectures, without any active exercise of my own powers. As soon as I understood the principles, I relinquished forever the pursuit of the mathematics; nor can I lament that I desisted before my mind was hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral

evidence, which must, however, determine the actions and opinions of our lives. I listened with more pleasure to the proposal of studying the law of nature and nations, which was taught in the Academy of Lausanne by Mr. Vicat, a professor of some learning and reputation. But instead of attending his public or private course, I preferred in my closet the lessons of his masters, and my own reason. Without being disgusted by Grotius or Puffendorf, I studied in their writings the duties of a man, the rights of a citizen, the theory of justice, (it is, alas! a theory), and the laws of peace and war, which have had some influence on the practice of modern Europe. My fatigues were alleviated by the good sense of their commentator Barbeyrac. Locke's Treatise of Government instructed me in the knowledge of Whig principles, which are rather founded in reason than experience; but my delight was in the frequent perusal of Montesquieu, whose energy of style and boldness of hypothesis were powerful to awaken and stimulate the genius of the age. The logic of De Crousaz had prepared me to engage with his master Locke, and his antagonist Bayle; of whom the former may be used as a bridle, and the latter as a spur, to the curiosity of a young philosopher. According to the nature of their respective works, the schools of argument and objection, I carefully went through the Essay on Human Understanding, and occasionally consulted the most interesting articles of the Philosophic Dictionary. In the infancy of my reason I turned over, as an idle amusement, the most serious and important treatise; in its maturity, the most trifling performance could exercise my taste or judgment; and more than once I have been led by a novel into a deep and instructive train of thinking.

But I cannot forbear to mention three particular books, since they may have remotely contributed to form the historian of the Roman Empire. 1. From the Provincial Letters of Pascal, which almost every year I have perused with new pleasure, I learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony, even on subjects of ecclesiastical solemnity. 2. The Life of Julian, by the Abbé de la Bleterie, first introduced me to the man and the times; and I should be glad to recover my first essay on the truth of the miracle which stopped the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. 3. In Giannone's Civil History of Naples, I observed with a critical eye the progress and abuse of sacerdotal power, and the revolutions of Italy in the darker ages. This various reading, which I now conducted with discretion, was digested, according to the precept and model of Mr. Locke, into a large commonplace-book; a practice, however, which I do not strenuously recommend. The action of the pen will doubtless imprint an idea on the mind as well as on the paper: but I much question whether the benefits of this laborious method are adequate to the waste of time; and I must agree with Dr. Johnson (Idler, No. 74), that "what is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed."

During two years, if I forget some boyish excursions of a day or a week, I was fixed at Lausanne; but at the end of the third summer my father consented that I should make the tour of Switzerland with Pavilliard: and our short absence of one month (September 21 — October 20, 1755) was a reward and relaxation of my assiduous studies.* The fashion of climbing the

* *From* EDWARD GIBBON *to* MRS. PORTEN.

". . . . Now for myself. As my father has given me leave to make a journey round Switzerland, we set out to-morrow. Buy a map of

mountains and reviewing the glaciers had not yet been introduced by foreign travellers who seek the sublime beauties of nature. But the political face of the country is not less diversified by the forms and spirit of so many various republics, from the jealous government of the few to the licentious freedom of the many. I contemplated with pleasure the new prospects of men and manners; though my conversation with the natives would have been more free and instructive, had I possessed the German as well as the French language.

Switzerland — it will cost you but a shilling — and follow me. I go by Iverdun, Neufchâtel, Bienne or Biel, Soleure or Solothurn, Bale or Basil, Bade, Zurich, Lucerne, and Bern. The voyage will be of about four weeks; so that I hope to find a letter from you waiting for me. As my father had given me leave to learn what I had a mind, I have learned to ride, and learn actually to dance and draw. Besides that, I often give ten or twelve hours a day to my studies. I find a great many agreeable people here; see them sometimes, and can say upon the whole, without vanity, that though I am the Englishman here who spends the least money, I am he who is the most generally liked. I told you that my father had promised to send me into France and Italy. I have thanked him for it; but if he would follow my plan, he won't do it yet awhile. I never liked young travellers; they go too raw to make any great remarks, and they lose a time which is (in my opinion) the most precious part of a man's life. My scheme would be, to spend this winter at Lausanne: for though it is a very good place to acquire the air of good company and the French tongue, we have no good professors. To spend (I say) the winter at Lausanne; go into England to see my friends for a couple of months; and after that, finish my studies either at Cambridge (for after what has passed one cannot think of Oxford) or at an university in Holland. If you liked the scheme, could you not propose it to my father by Metcalf, or somebody who has a certain credit over him? I forgot to ask you whether, in case my father writes to tell me of his marriage, would you advise me to compliment my mother-in-law? I think so. My health is so very regular that I have nothing to say about it.

I have been the whole day writing you this letter; the preparations for our voyage gave me a thousand interruptions. Besides that, I was obliged to write in English. This last reason will seem a paradox, but I assure you the French is much more familiar to me. I am, etc.

E. GIBBON.

LAUSANNE, Sept. 20, 1755.

We passed through most of the principal towns in Switzerland: Neufchâtel, Bienne, Soleure, Arau, Baden, Zurich, Basil, and Bern. In every place we visited the churches, arsenals, libraries, and all the most eminent persons; and after my return, I digested my notes in fourteen or fifteen sheets of a French journal, which I despatched to my father, as a proof that my time and his money had not been misspent. Had I found this journal among his papers, I might be tempted to select some passages; but I will not transcribe the printed accounts, and it may be sufficient to notice a remarkable spot which left a deep and lasting impression on my memory. From Zurich we proceeded to the Benedictine abbey of Einsiedlen, more commonly styled Our Lady of the Hermits. I was astonished by the profuse ostentation of riches in the poorest corner of Europe; amidst a savage scene of woods and mountains a palace appears to have been erected by magic; and it was erected by the potent magic of religion. A crowd of palmers and votaries was prostrate before the altar. The title and worship of the Mother of God provoked my indignation; and the lively naked image of superstition suggested to me, as in the same place it had done to Zuinglius, the most pressing argument for the reformation of the Church. About two years after this tour, I passed at Geneva a useful and agreeable month; but this excursion, and some short visits in the Pays de Vaud, did not materially interrupt my studious and sedentary life at Lausanne.

My thirst of improvement, and the languid state of science at Lausanne, soon prompted me to solicit a literary correspondence with several men of learning, whom I had not an opportunity of personally consult-

ing. 1. In the perusal of Livy (xxx. 44) I had been stopped by a sentence in a speech of Hannibal, which cannot be reconciled by any torture with his character or argument. The commentators dissemble, or confess their perplexity. It occurred to me that the change of a single letter, by substituting *otio* instead of *odio*, might restore a clear and consistent sense; but I wished to weigh my emendation in scales less partial than my own. I addressed myself to M. Crevier, the successor of Rollin, and a professor in the University of Paris, who had published a large and valuable edition of Livy. His answer was speedy and polite; he praised my ingenuity, and adopted my conjecture. 2. I maintained a Latin correspondence, at first anonymous, and afterwards in my own name, with Professor Breitinger of Zurich, the learned editor of a Septuagint Bible. In our frequent letters we discussed many questions of antiquity, many passages of the Latin classics. I proposed my interpretations and amendments. His censures, for he did not spare my boldness of conjecture, were sharp and strong; and I was encouraged by the consciousness of my strength when I could stand in free debate against a critic of such eminence and erudition. 3. I corresponded on similar topics with the celebrated Professor Matthew Gesner, of the University of Göttingen; and he accepted, as courteously as the two former, the invitation of an unknown youth. But his abilities might possibly be decayed; his elaborate letters were feeble and prolix; and when I asked his proper direction, the vain old man covered half a sheet of paper with the foolish enumeration of his titles and offices. 4. These professors of Paris, Zurich, and Göttingen were strangers, whom I presumed to address on the credit of their name; but Mr. Allamand, minister

at Bex, was my personal friend, with whom I maintained a more free and interesting correspondence. He was a master of language, of science, and above all of dispute; and his acute and flexible logic could support with equal address, and perhaps with equal indifference, the adverse sides of every possible question. His spirit was active, but his pen had been indolent. Mr. Allamand had exposed himself to much scandal and reproach by an anonymous letter (1745) to the Protestants of France; in which he labors to persuade them that public worship is the exclusive right and duty of the State, and that their numerous assemblies of dissenters and rebels were not authorized by the law or the gospel. His style is animated, his arguments specious; and if the Papist may seem to lurk under the mask of a Protestant, the philosopher is concealed under the disguise of a Papist. After some trials in France and Holland, which were defeated by his fortune or his character, a genius, that might have enlightened or deluded the world, was buried in a country living, unknown to fame, and discontented with mankind. *Est sacrificulus in pago, et rusticos decipit.* As often as private or ecclesiastical business called him to Lausanne, I enjoyed the pleasure and benefit of his conversation, and we were mutually flattered by our attention to each other. Our correspondence, in his absence, chiefly turned on Locke's metaphysics, — which he attacked, and I defended, — the origin of ideas, the principles of evidence, and the doctrine of liberty;

"And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

By fencing with so skilful a master I acquired some dexterity in the use of my philosophic weapons; but I was still the slave of education and prejudice. He

had some measures to keep; and I much suspect that he never showed me the true colors of his secret scepticism.

Before I was recalled from Switzerland, I had the satisfaction of seeing the most extraordinary man of the age; a poet, an historian, a philosopher, who has filled thirty quartos of prose and verse with his various productions, often excellent, and always entertaining. Need I add the name of Voltaire? After forfeiting, by his own misconduct, the friendship of the first of kings, he retired, at the age of sixty, with a plentiful fortune, to a free and beautiful country, and resided two winters (1757 and 1758) in the town or neighborhood of Lausanne. My desire of beholding Voltaire, whom I then rated above his real magnitude, was easily gratified. He received me with civility as an English youth, but I cannot boast of any peculiar notice or distinction: *Virgilium vidi tantum.*

The ode which he composed on his first arrival on the banks of the Leman lake, "O maison d'Aristippe! O jardin d'Epicure!" etc., had been imparted as a secret to the gentleman by whom I was introduced. He allowed me to read it twice; I knew it by heart; and as my discretion was not equal to my memory, the author was soon displeased by the circulation of a copy. In writing this trivial anecdote, I wished to observe whether my memory was impaired; and I have the comfort of finding that every line of the poem is still engraved in fresh and indelible characters. The highest gratification which I derived from Voltaire's residence at Lausanne was the uncommon circumstance of hearing a great poet declaim his own productions on the stage. He had formed a company of gentlemen and ladies, some of whom were not desti-

tute of talents. A decent theatre was framed at Monrepos, a country-house at the end of a suburb: dresses and scenes were provided at the expense of the actors; and the author directed the rehearsals with the zeal and attention of paternal love. In two successive winters his tragedies of Zaire, Alzire, Zulime, and his sentimental comedy of the Enfant Prodigue, were played at the theatre of Monrepos. Voltaire represented the characters best adapted to his years, — Lusignan, Alvarez, Benassar, Euphemon. His declamation was fashioned to the pomp and cadence of the old stage; and he expressed the enthusiasm of poetry, rather than the feelings of nature. My ardor, which soon became conspicuous, seldom failed of procuring me a ticket. The habits of pleasure fortified my taste for the French theatre, and that taste has perhaps abated my idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakespeare, which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of an Englishman. The wit and philosophy of Voltaire, his table and theatre, refined in a visible degree the manners of Lausanne; and, however addicted to study, I enjoyed my share of the amusements of society. After the representation of Monrepos I sometimes supped with the actors. I was now familiar in some, and acquainted in many houses; and my evenings were generally devoted to cards and conversation, either in private parties or numerous assemblies.

I hesitate, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. By this word I do not mean the polite attention. the gallantry, without hope or design, which has originated in the spirit of chivalry and is interwoven with the texture of French manners. I understand by this passion the union of desire, friendship, and tenderness,

which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being. I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod were embellished by the virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was respectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content, with a small salary and laborious duty, in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village he bestowed a liberal and even learned education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages; and in her short visits to some relations at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty and erudition, of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honorably encouraged the connection. In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom; she listened to the voice of truth

and passion; and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity: but on my return to England, I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; * my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself; and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died; his stipend died with him; his daughter retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother; but in her lowest distress she maintained a spotless reputation, and a dignified behavior. A rich banker of Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure; and in the capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every change of prosperity and disgrace he has reclined on the bosom of a faithful friend; and Mademoiselle Curchod is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy.

Whatsoever have been the fruits of my education, they must be ascribed to the fortunate banishment

* See Œuvres de Rousseau, Tom. XXXIII. pp. 88, 89, octavo edition. As an author, I shall not appeal from the judgment or taste or caprice of Jean Jacques: but that extraordinary man, whom I admire and pity, should have been less precipitate in condemning the moral character and conduct of a stranger.

which placed me at Lausanne. I have sometimes applied to my own fate the verses of Pindar, which remind an Olympic champion that his victory was the consequence of his exile; and that at home, like a domestic fowl, his days might have rolled away inactive or inglorious.

. . . ἤτοι καὶ τεά κεν,
Ἐνδομάχας ἄτ' ἀλέκτωρ,
Συγγόνῳ παρ' ἑστὶα
Ἀκλεὴς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε πορῶν·
Εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα
Κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτας.*

OLYMP. XII.

If my childish revolt against the religion of my country had not stripped me in time of my academic gown, the five important years so liberally improved in the studies and conversation of Lausanne would have been steeped in port and prejudice among the monks of Oxford. Had the fatigue of idleness compelled me to read, the path of learning would not have been enlightened by a ray of philosophic freedom. I should have grown to manhood ignorant of the life and language of Europe, and my knowledge of the world would have been confined to an English cloister. But my religious error fixed me at Lausanne in a state of banishment and disgrace. The rigid course of discipline and abstinence to which I was condemned, invigorated the constitution of my mind and body;

* Thus, like the crested bird of Mars at home
Engag'd in foul domestic jars,
And wasted with intestine wars,
Inglorious hadst thou spent thy vig'rous bloom
Had not sedition's civil broils
Expell'd thee from thy native Crete,
And driv'n thee with more glorious toils
Th' Olympic crown in Pisa's plain to meet.

WEST'S *Pind.*

poverty and pride estranged me from my countrymen. One mischief, however, and in their eyes a serious and irreparable mischief, was derived from the success of my Swiss education, — I had ceased to be an Englishman. At the flexible period of youth, from the age of sixteen to twenty-one, my opinions, habits, and sentiments were cast in a foreign mould; the faint and distant remembrance of England was almost obliterated; my native language was grown less familiar; and I should have cheerfully accepted the offer of a moderate independence on the terms of perpetual exile. By the good sense and temper of Pavilliard my yoke was insensibly lightened; he left me master of my time and actions; but he could neither change my situation nor increase my allowance; and with the progress of my years and reason I impatiently sighed for the moment of my deliverance. At length, in the spring of the year 1758, my father signified his permission and his pleasure that I should immediately return home. We were then in the midst of a war; the resentment of the French at our taking their ships without a declaration had rendered that polite nation somewhat peevish and difficult. They denied a passage to English travellers, and the road through Germany was circuitous, toilsome, and perhaps in the neighborhood of the armies exposed to some danger. In this perplexity two Swiss officers of my acquaintance in the Dutch service, who were returning to their garrisons, offered to conduct me through France as one of their companions; nor did we sufficiently reflect that my borrowed name and regimentals might have been considered, in case of a discovery, in a very serious light. I took my leave of Lausanne on the 11th of April, 1758, with a mixture of joy and regret, in the

firm resolution of revisiting, as a man, the persons and places which had been so dear to my youth. We travelled slowly, but pleasantly, in a hired coach, over the hills of Franche-Compté and the fertile province of Lorraine, and passed without accident or inquiry through several fortified towns of the French frontier: from thence we entered the wild Ardennes of the Austrian duchy of Luxembourg; and after crossing the Meuse at Liége, we traversed the heaths of Brabant, and reached, on the fifteenth day, our Dutch garrison of Bois le Duc. In our passage through Nancy my eye was gratified by the aspect of a regular and beautiful city, the work of Stanislaus, who, after the storms of Polish royalty, reposed in the love and gratitude of his new subjects of Lorraine. In our halt at Maestricht I visited M. de Beaufort, a learned critic, who was known to me by his specious arguments against the five first centuries of the Roman History. After dropping my regimental companions, I stepped aside to visit Rotterdam and the Hague. I wished to have observed a country, the monument of freedom and industry; but my days were numbered, and a longer delay would have been ungraceful. I hastened to embark at the Brill, landed the next day at Harwich, and proceeded to London, where my father awaited my arrival. The whole term of my first absence from England was four years ten months and fifteen days.

In the prayers of the church our personal concerns are judiciously reduced to the threefold distinction of mind, body, and estate. The sentiments of the mind excite and exercise our social sympathy. The review of my moral and literary character is the most interesting to myself and to the public; and I may expatiate without reproach on my private studies, since

they have produced the public writings which can alone entitle me to the esteem and friendship of my readers. The experience of the world inculcates a discreet reserve on the subject of our person and estate, and we soon learn that a free disclosure of our riches or poverty would provoke the malice of envy, or encourage the insolence of contempt.

The only person in England whom I was impatient to see was my Aunt Porten, the affectionate guardian of my tender years. I hastened to her house in College Street, Westminster; and the evening was spent in the effusions of joy and confidence. It was not without some awe and apprehension that I approached the presence of my father. My infancy, to speak the truth, had been neglected at home; the severity of his look and language at our last parting still dwelt on my memory; nor could I form any notion of his character or my probable reception. They were both more agreeable than I could expect. The domestic discipline of our ancestors has been relaxed by the philosophy and softness of the age; and if my father remembered that he had trembled before a stern parent, it was only to adopt with his own son an opposite mode of behavior. He received me as a man and a friend; all constraint was banished at our first interview, and we ever afterwards continued on the same terms of easy and equal politeness. He applauded the success of my education; every word and action was expressive of the most cordial affection; and our lives would have passed without a cloud, if his economy had been equal to his fortune, or if his fortune had been equal to his desires. During my absence he had married his second wife, Miss Dorothea Patton, who was introduced to me with the most unfavorable prejudice. I

considered his second marriage as an act of displeasure, and I was disposed to hate the rival of my mother. But the injustice was in my own fancy, and the imaginary monster was an amiable and deserving woman. I could not be mistaken in the first view of her understanding, her knowledge, and the elegant spirit of her conversation; her polite welcome, and her assiduous care to study and gratify my wishes, announced at least that the surface would be smooth; and my suspicions of art and falsehood were gradually dispelled by the full discovery of her warm and exquisite sensibility. After some reserve on my side, our minds associated in confidence and friendship; and as Mrs. Gibbon had neither children nor the hopes of children, we more easily adopted the tender names and genuine characters of mother and of son. By the indulgence of these parents, I was left at liberty to consult my taste or reason in the choice of place, of company, and of amusements; and my excursions were bounded only by the limits of the island, and the measure of my income. Some faint efforts were made to procure me the employment of secretary to a foreign embassy; and I listened to a scheme which would again have transported me to the Continent. Mrs. Gibbon, with seeming wisdom, exhorted me to take chambers in the Temple, and devote my leisure to the study of the law. I cannot repent of having neglected her advice. Few men, without the spur of necessity, have resolution to force their way through the thorns and thickets of that gloomy labyrinth. Nature had not endowed me with the bold and ready eloquence which makes itself heard amidst the tumult of the bar; and I should probably have been diverted from the labors of literature, without acquiring the fame or fortune of a suc-

cessful pleader. I had no need to call to my aid the regular duties of a profession; every day, every hour, was agreeably filled; nor have I known, like so many of my countrymen, the tediousness of an idle life.

Of the two years (May, 1758, to May, 1760) between my return to England and the embodying of the Hampshire militia, I passed about nine months in London, and the remainder in the country. The metropolis affords many amusements, which are open to all. It is itself an astonishing and perpetual spectacle to the curious eye; and each taste, each sense, may be gratified by the variety of objects which will occur in the long circuit of a morning walk. I assiduously frequented the theatres at a very propitious era of the stage, when a constellation of excellent actors, both in tragedy and comedy, was eclipsed by the meridian brightness of Garrick in the maturity of his judgment and vigor of his performance. The pleasures of a town-life are within the reach of every man who is regardless of his health, his money, and his company. By the contagion of example I was sometimes seduced; but the better habits which I had formed at Lausanne induced me to seek a more elegant and rational society; and if my search was less easy and successful than I might have hoped, I shall at present impute the failure to the disadvantages of my situation and character. Had the rank and fortune of my parents given them an annual establishment in London, their own house would have introduced me to a numerous and polite circle of acquaintance. But my father's taste had always preferred the highest and the lowest company, for which he was equally qualified; and after a twelve years' retirement, he was no longer

in the memory of the great with whom he had associated. I found myself a stranger in the midst of a vast and unknown city; and at my entrance into life I was reduced to some dull family parties, and some scattered connections, which were not such as I should have chosen for myself. The most useful friends of my father were the Mallets; they received me with civility and kindness at first on his account, and afterwards on my own; and (if I may use Lord Chesterfield's words) I was soon *domesticated* in their house. Mr. Mallet, a name among the English poets, is praised by an unforgiving enemy for the ease and elegance of his conversation; and his wife was not destitute of wit or learning. By his assistance I was introduced to Lady Hervey, the mother of the present Earl of Bristol. Her age and infirmities confined her at home; her dinners were select; in the evening her house was open to the best company of both sexes and all nations; nor was I displeased at her preference and affectation of the manners, the language, and the literature of France. But my progress in the English world was in general left to my own efforts, and those efforts were languid and slow. I had not been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address, which unlock every door and every bosom; nor would it be reasonable to complain of the just consequences of my sickly childhood, foreign education, and reserved temper. While coaches were rattling through Bond Street, I have passed many a solitary evening in my lodging with my books. My studies were interrupted by a sigh which I breathed towards Lausanne; and on the approach of spring I withdrew without reluctance from the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without

pleasure. In each of the twenty-five years of my acquaintance with London (1758–1783) the prospect gradually brightened; and this unfavorable picture most properly belongs to the first period after my return from Switzerland.

My father's residence in Hampshire, where I have passed many light and some heavy hours, was at Buriton, near Petersfield, one mile from the Portsmouth road, and at the easy distance of fifty-eight miles from London.* An old mansion, in a state of decay, had been converted into the fashion and convenience of a modern house; and if strangers had nothing to see, the inhabitants had little to desire. The spot was not happily chosen, at the end of the village and the bottom of the hill: but the aspect of the adjacent grounds was various and cheerful; the downs commanded a noble prospect, and the long hanging woods in sight of the house could not perhaps have been improved by art or expense. My father kept in his own hands the whole of the estate, and even rented some additional land; and whatsoever might be the balance of profit and loss, the farm supplied him with amusement and plenty. The produce maintained a number of men and horses, which were multiplied by the intermixture of domestic and rural servants; and in the intervals of labor the favorite team, a handsome set of bays or grays, was harnessed to the coach. The economy of the house was regulated by the taste and prudence of Mrs. Gibbon. She prided herself in the elegance of her occasional dinners; and from the uncleanly avarice of Madame Pavilliard I was suddenly transported to the daily neatness and luxury of an English table.

* The estate and manor of Beriton, otherwise Buriton, were considerable, and were sold a few years ago to Lord Stawell. S.

Our immediate neighborhood was rare and rustic; but from the verge of our hills, as far as Chichester and Goodwood, the western district of Sussex was interspersed with noble seats and hospitable families, with whom we cultivated a friendly, and might have enjoyed a very frequent, intercourse. As my stay at Buriton was always voluntary, I was received and dismissed with smiles; but the comforts of my retirement did not depend on the ordinary pleasures of the country. My father could never inspire me with his love and knowledge of farming. I never handled a gun, I seldom mounted a horse; and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation. At home I occupied a pleasant and spacious apartment; the library on the same floor was soon considered as my peculiar domain; and I might say with truth, that I was never less alone than when by myself. My sole complaint, which I piously suppressed, arose from the kind restraint imposed on the freedom of my time. By the habit of early rising I always secured a sacred portion of the day, and many scattered moments were stolen and employed by my studious industry. But the family hours of breakfast, of dinner, of tea, and of supper were regular and long: after breakfast Mrs. Gibbon expected my company in her dressing-room; after tea my father claimed my conversation, and the perusal of the newspapers; and in the midst of an interesting work I was often called down to receive the visit of some idle neighbors. Their dinners and visits required, in due season, a similar return; and I dreaded the period of the full moon, which was usually reserved for our more distant excursions. I could not refuse

attending my father, in the summer of 1759, to the races at Stockbridge, Reading, and Odiam, where he had entered a horse for the hunters' plate; and I was not displeased with the sight of our Olympic games, the beauty of the spot, the fleetness of the horses, and the gay tumult of the numerous spectators. As soon as the militia business was agitated, many days were tediously consumed in meetings of deputy-lieutenants at Petersfield, Alton, and Winchester. In the close of the same year (1759) Sir Simeon (then Mr.) Stewart attempted an unsuccessful contest for the county of Southampton, against Mr. Legge, Chancellor of the Exchequer, — a well-known contest, in which Lord Bute's influence was first exerted and censured. Our canvass at Portsmouth and Gosport lasted several days; but the interruption of my studies was compensated in some degree by the spectacle of English manners, and the acquisition of some practical knowledge.

If in a more domestic or more dissipated scene my application was somewhat relaxed, the love of knowledge was inflamed and gratified by the command of books; and I compared the poverty of Lausanne with the plenty of London. My father's study at Buriton was stuffed with much trash of the last age, with much high church divinity and politics, which have long since gone to their proper place: yet it contained some valuable editions of the classics and the fathers, the choice, as it should seem, of Mr. Law; and many English publications of the times had been occasionally added. From this slender beginning I have gradually formed a numerous and select library, the foundation of my works, and the best comfort of my life, both at home and abroad. On the receipt of the first quarter, a large

share of my allowance was appropriated to my literary wants. I cannot forget the joy with which I exchanged a bank-note of twenty pounds for the twenty volumes of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions; nor would it have been easy, by any other expenditure of the same sum, to have procured so large and lasting a fund of rational amusement. At a time when I most assiduously frequented this school of ancient literature, I thus expressed my opinion of a learned and various collection, which since the year 1759 has been doubled in magnitude, though not in merit, — "Une de ces sociétés qui ont mieux immortalisé Louis XIV., qu'une ambition souvent pernicieuse aux hommes, commençoit déjà ces recherches qui réunissent la justesse de l'esprit, l'aménité, et l'érudition: où l'on voit tant de découvertes, et quelquefois, ce qui ne cède qu'à peine aux découvertes, une *ignorance* modeste et *savante*." The review of my library must be reserved for the period of its maturity; but in this place I may allow myself to observe that I am not conscious of having ever bought a book from a motive of ostentation; that every volume, before it was deposited on the shelf, was either read or sufficiently examined; and that I soon adopted the tolerating maxim of the elder Pliny, "nullum esse librum tam malum ut non ex aliquâ parte prodesset." I could not yet find leisure or courage to renew the pursuit of the Greek language, excepting by reading the lessons of the Old and New Testament every Sunday when I attended the family to church. The series of my Latin authors was less strenuously completed; but the acquisition, by inheritance or purchase, of the best editions of Cicero, Quintilian, Livy, Tacitus, Ovid, etc., afforded a fair prospect which I seldom neglected. I persevered in the useful method of

abstracts and observations; and a single example may suffice of a note which had almost swelled into a work. The solution of a passage of Livy (XXXVIII. 38) involved me in the dry and dark treatises of Greaves, Arbuthnot, Hooper, Bernard, Eisenschmidt, Gronovius, La Barré, Freret, etc.; and in my French essay (Chap. 20) I ridiculously send the reader to my own *manuscript* remarks on the weights, coins, and measures of the ancients, which were abruptly terminated by the militia drum.

As I am now entering on a more ample field of society and study, I can only hope to avoid a vain and prolix garrulity, by overlooking the vulgar crowd of my acquaintance, and confining myself to such intimate friends among books and men as are best entitled to my notice by their own merit and reputation, or by the deep impression which they have left on my mind. Yet I will embrace this occasion of recommending to the young student a practice which about this time I myself adopted. After glancing my eye over the design and order of a new book, I suspended the perusal till I had finished the task of self-examination, till I had revolved in a solitary walk all that I knew, or believed, or had thought on the subject of the whole work, or of some particular chapter: I was then qualified to discern how much the author added to my original stock; and if I was sometimes satisfied by the agreement, I was sometimes alarmed by the opposition of our ideas. The favorite companions of my leisure were our English writers since the Revolution: they breathe the spirit of reason and liberty; and they most seasonably contributed to restore the purity of my own language, which had been corrupted by the long use of a foreign idiom. By the judicious advice of Mr. Mallet I was

directed to the writings of Swift and Addison; wit and simplicity are their common attributes: but the style of Swift is supported by manly original vigor; that of Addison is adorned by the female graces of elegance and mildness. The old reproach, that no British altars had been raised to the Muse of history, was recently disproved by the first performances of Robertson and Hume, the histories of Scotland and of the Stuarts. I will assume the presumption of saying that I was not unworthy to read them: nor will I disguise my different feelings in the repeated perusals. The perfect composition, the nervous language, the well-turned periods of Dr. Robertson, inflamed me to the ambitious hope that I might one day tread in his footsteps; the calm philosophy, the careless, inimitable beauties of his friend and rival, often forced me to close the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair.

The design of my first work, the Essay on the Study of Literature, was suggested by a refinement of vanity, the desire of justifying and praising the object of a favorite pursuit. In France, to which my ideas were confined, the learning and language of Greece and Rome were neglected by a philosophic age. The guardian of those studies, the Academy of Inscriptions, was degraded to the lowest rank among the three royal societies of Paris: the new appellation of Erudits was contemptuously applied to the successors of Lipsius and Casaubon; and I was provoked to hear (see M. d'Alembert, "Discours préliminaire à l'Encyclopédie") that the exercise of the memory, their sole merit, had been superseded by the nobler faculties of the imagination and the judgment. I was ambitious of proving by my own example, as well as by my precepts, that all the faculties of the mind may be exercised and displayed

by the study of ancient literature; I began to select and adorn the various proofs and illustrations which had offered themselves in reading the classics; and the first pages or chapters of my Essay were composed before my departure from Lausanne. The hurry of the journey, and of the first weeks of my English life, suspended all thoughts of serious application: but my object was ever before my eyes; and no more than ten days, from the 1st to the 11th of July, were suffered to elapse after my summer establishment at Buriton. My Essay was finished in about six weeks; and as soon as a fair copy had been transcribed by one of the French prisoners at Petersfield, I looked round for a critic and judge of my first performance. A writer can seldom be content with the doubtful recompense of solitary approbation; but a youth, ignorant of the world and of himself, must desire to weigh his talents in some scales less partial than his own: my conduct was natural, my motive laudable, my choice of Dr. Maty judicious and fortunate. By descent and education Dr. Maty, though born in Holland, might be considered as a Frenchman; but he was fixed in London by the practice of physic, and an office in the British Museum. His reputation was justly founded on the eighteen volumes of the Journal Brittannique, which he had supported, almost alone, with perseverance and success. This humble though useful labor, which had once been dignified by the genius of Bayle and the learning of Le Clerc, was not disgraced by the taste, the knowledge, and the judgment of Maty: he exhibits a candid and pleasing view of the state of literature in England during a period of six years (January, 1750, to December, 1755); and, far different from his angry son, he handles the rod of criticism with the tenderness

and reluctance of a parent. The author of the Journal Brittannique sometimes aspires to the character of a poet and philosopher: his style is pure and elegant; and in his virtues, or even in his defects, he may be ranked as one of the last disciples of the school of Fontenelle. His answer to my first letter was prompt and polite: after a careful examination he returned my manuscript, with some animadversion and much applause; and when I visited London in the ensuing winter, we discussed the design and execution in several free and familiar conversations. In a short excursion to Buriton I reviewed my Essay, according to his friendly advice; and after suppressing a third, adding a third, and altering a third, I consummated my first labor by a short preface, which is dated February 3, 1759. Yet I still shrunk from the press with the terrors of virgin modesty: the manuscript was safely deposited in my desk; and as my attention was engaged by new objects, the delay might have been prolonged till I had fulfilled the precept of Horace, "Nonumque prematur in annum."

Two years elapsed in silence; but in the spring of 1761 I yielded to the authority of a parent, and complied, like a pious son, with the wish of my own heart. My private resolves were influenced by the state of Europe. About this time the belligerent powers had made and accepted overtures of peace; our English plenipotentiaries were named to assist at the Congress of Augsburg, which never met: I wished to attend them as a gentleman or a secretary; and my father fondly believed that the proof of some literary talents might introduce me to public notice, and second the recommendations of my friends. After a last revisal, I consulted with Mr. Mallet and Dr. Maty, who ap-

proved the design and promoted the execution. Mr. Mallet, after hearing me read my manuscript, received it from my hands, and delivered it into those of Becket, with whom he made an agreement in my name, — an easy agreement: I required only a certain number of copies; and, without transferring my property, I devolved on the bookseller the charges and profits of the edition. Dr. Maty undertook, in my absence, to correct the sheets: he inserted, without my knowledge, an elegant and flattering epistle to the author, which is composed, however, with so much art, that, in case of a defeat, his favorable report might have been ascribed to the indulgence of a friend for the rash attempt of a young English gentleman. The work was printed and published, under the title of "Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature, à Londres, chez T. Becket et P. A. de Hondt, 1761," in a small volume in duodecimo: my dedication to my father, a proper and pious address, was composed the 28th of May. Dr. Maty's letter is dated the 16th of June; and I received the first copy (June 23) at Alresford, two days before I marched with the Hampshire militia. Some weeks afterwards, on the same ground, I presented my book to the late Duke of York, who breakfasted in Colonel Pitt's tent. By my father's direction, and Mallet's advice, many literary gifts were distributed to several eminent characters in England and France; two books were sent to the Count de Caylus, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, at Paris: I had reserved twenty copies for my friends at Lausanne, as the first fruits of my education, and a grateful token of my remembrance: and on all these persons I levied an unavoidable tax of civility and compliment. It is not surprising that a work, of which the style and sentiments were so totally

foreign, should have been more successful abroad than at home. I was delighted by the copious extracts, the warm commendations, and the flattering predictions, of the journals of France and Holland: and the next year (1762) a new edition (I believe at Geneva) extended the fame, or at least the circulation, of the work. In England it was received with cold indifference, little read, and speedily forgotten: a small impression was slowly dispersed; the bookseller murmured, and the author (had his feelings been more exquisite) might have wept over the blunders and baldness of the English translation. The publication of my History fifteen years afterwards revived the memory of my first performance, and the Essay was eagerly sought in the shops. But I refused the permission which Becket solicited of reprinting it: the public curiosity was imperfectly satisfied by a pirated copy of the booksellers of Dublin; and when a copy of the original edition has been discovered in a sale, the primitive value of half a crown has risen to the fanciful price of a guinea or thirty shillings.

Upon the whole, I may apply to the first labor of my pen the speech of a far superior artist, when he surveyed the first productions of his pencil. After viewing some portraits which he had painted in his youth, my friend Sir Joshua Reynolds acknowledged to me that he was rather humbled than flattered by the comparison with his present works; and that, after so much time and study, he had conceived his improvement to be much greater than he found it to have been.

At Lausanne I composed the first chapters of my Essay in French, the familiar language of my conversation and studies, in which it was easier for me to write than in my mother-tongue. After my return to

England I continued the same practice, without any affectation, or design, of repudiating (as Dr. Bentley would say) my vernacular idiom. But I should have escaped some anti-gallican clamor, had I been content with the more natural character of an English author. I should have been more consistent, had I rejected Mallet's advice of prefixing an English dedication to a French book; a confusion of tongues that seemed to accuse the ignorance of my patron. The use of a foreign dialect might be excused by the hope of being employed as a negotiator, by the desire of being generally understood on the Continent; but my true motive was doubtless the ambition of new and singular fame, — an Englishman claiming a place among the writers of France. The Latin tongue had been consecrated by the service of the church; it was refined by the imitation of the ancients; and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the scholars of Europe enjoyed the advantage, which they have gradually resigned, of conversing and writing in a common and learned idiom. As that idiom was no longer in any country the vulgar speech, they all stood on a level with each other; yet a citizen of old Rome might have smiled at the best Latinity of the Germans and Britons; and we may learn from the Ciceronianus of Erasmus, how difficult it was found to steer a middle course between pedantry and barbarism. The Romans themselves had sometimes attempted the more perilous task of writing in a living language, and appealing to the taste and judgment of the natives. The vanity of Tully was doubly interested in the Greek memoirs of his own consulship; and if he modestly supposes that some Latinisms might be detected in his style, he is confident of his own skill in the art of Isocrates and Aris-

totle; and he requests his friend Atticus to disperse the copies of his work at Athens, and in the other cities of Greece (ad Atticum, I. 19, II. 1). But it must not be forgotten that from infancy to manhood Cicero and his contemporaries had read, and declaimed, and composed, with equal diligence in both languages; and that he was not allowed to frequent a Latin school till he had imbibed the lessons of the Greek grammarians and rhetoricians. In modern times the language of France has been diffused by the merit of her writers, the social manners of the natives, the influence of the monarchy, and the exile of the Protestants. Several foreigners have seized the opportunity of speaking to Europe in this common dialect; and Germany may plead the authority of Leibnitz and Frederick, of the first of her philosophers and the greatest of her kings. The just pride and laudable prejudice of England has restrained this communication of idiom; and of all the nations on this side of the Alps, my countrymen are the least practised and least perfect in the exercise of the French tongue. I might therefore assume the "primus ego in patriam," etc., but with what success I have explored this untrodden path must be left to the decision of my French readers. Dr. Maty, who might himself be questioned as a foreigner, has secured his retreat at my expense. "Je ne crois pas que vous vous piquiez d'être moins facile à reconnoître pour un Anglois que Lucullus pour un Romain." My friends at Paris have been more indulgent; they received me as a countryman, or at least as a provincial; but they were friends and Parisians.* The defects which Maty insinuates, "Ces traits saillans, ces figures

* The copious extracts which were given in the Journal Étranger by Mr. Suard, a judicious critic, must satisfy both the author and the

hardies, ce sacrifice de la règle au sentiment, et de la cadence à la force," are the faults of the youth rather than of the stranger: and after the long and laborious exercise of my own language, I am conscious that my French style has been ripened and improved.

I have already hinted that the publication of my Essay was delayed till I had embraced the military profession. I shall now amuse myself with the recollection of an active scene, which bears no affinity to any other period of my studious and social life.

In the outset of a glorious war the English people had been defended by the aid of German mercenaries. A national militia has been the cry of every patriot since the Revolution; and this measure, both in Parliament and in the field, was supported by the country gentlemen, or Tories, who insensibly transferred their loyalty to the House of Hanover; in the language of Mr. Burke, they have changed the idol, but they have preserved the idolatry. In the act of offering our names, and receiving our commissions, as major and captain in the Hampshire regiment (June 12, 1759), we had not supposed that we should be dragged away, my father from his farm, myself from my books, and condemned during two years and a half (May 10, 1760, to December, 23 1762) to a wandering life of military servitude. But a weekly or monthly exercise of thirty thousand provincials would have left them useless and ridiculous; and after the pretence of an invasion had vanished, the popularity of Mr. Pitt gave a sanction to the illegal step of keeping them till the end of the war under arms, in constant pay and duty,

public. I may here observe that I have never seen in any literary review a tolerable account of my History. The manufacture of journals, at least on the Continent, is miserably debased.

and at a distance from their respective homes. When the king's order for our embodying came down, it was too late to retreat and too soon to repent. The south battalion of the Hampshire militia was a small independent corps of four hundred and seventy-six, officers and men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Worsley, who, after a prolix and passionate contest, delivered us from the tyranny of the lord lieutenant, the Duke of Bolton. My proper station, as first captain, was at the head of my own, and afterwards of the grenadier company; but in the absence, or even in the presence, of the two field officers, I was intrusted by my friend and my father with the effective labor of dictating the orders, and exercising the battalion. With the help of an original journal, I could write the history of my bloodless and inglorious campaigns; but as these events have lost much of their importance in my own eyes, they shall be despatched in a few words. On the beach at Dover we had exercised in sight of the Gallic shores. But the most splendid and useful scene of our life was a four months' encampment on Winchester Down, under the command of the Earl of Effingham. Our army consisted of the thirty-fourth regiment of foot and six militia corps. The consciousness of defects was stimulated by friendly emulation. We improved our time and opportunities in morning and evening field-days; and in the general reviews the South Hampshire were rather a credit than a disgrace to the line. In our subsequent quarters of the Devizes and Blandford, we advanced with a quick step in our military studies; the ballot of the ensuing summer renewed our vigor and youth; and had the militia subsisted another year, we might have contested the prize with the most perfect of our brethren.

The loss of so many busy and idle hours was not compensated by any elegant pleasure; and my temper was insensibly soured by the society of our rustic officers. In every state there exists, however, a balance of good and evil. The habits of a sedentary life were usefully broken by the duties of an active profession; in the healthful exercise of the field I hunted with a battalion instead of a pack; and at that time I was ready, at any hour of the day or night, to fly from quarters to London, from London to quarters, on the slightest call of private or regimental business. But my principal obligation to the militia was the making me an Englishman and a soldier. After my foreign education, with my reserved temper, I should long have continued a stranger to my native country, had I not been shaken in this various scene of new faces and new friends; had not experience forced me to feel the characters of our leading men, the state of parties, the forms of office, and the operation of our civil and military system. In this peaceful service I imbibed the rudiments of the language and science of tactics, which opened a new field of study and observation. I diligently read and meditated the Mémoires Militaires of Quintus Icilius (Mr. Guichardt), the only writer who has united the merits of a professor and a veteran. The discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion; and the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire.

A youth of any spirit is fired even by the play of arms, and in the first sallies of my enthusiasm I had seriously attempted to embrace the regular profession of a soldier. But this military fever was cooled by

the enjoyment of our mimic Bellona, who soon unveiled to my eyes her naked deformity. How often did I sigh for my proper station in society and letters! How often (a proud comparison) did I repeat the complaint of Cicero in the command of a provincial army: "Clitellæ bovi sunt impositæ. Est incredibile quàm me negotii tædeat. Non habet satis magnum campum ille tibi non ignotis cursus animi; et industriæ meæ præclara opera cessat. Lucem, *libros*, urbem, domum, vos desidero. Sed feram, ut potero; sit modo annuum. Si prorogatur, actum est."* From a service without danger I might indeed have retired without disgrace; but as often as I hinted a wish of resignation, my fetters were riveted by the friendly entreaties of the colonel, the parental authority of the major, and my own regard for the honor and welfare of the battalion. When I felt that my personal escape was impracticable, I bowed my neck to the yoke: my servitude was protracted far beyond the annual patience of Cicero; and it was not till after the preliminaries of peace that I received my discharge from the act of government which disembodied the militia.

When I complain of the loss of time, justice to myself and to the militia must throw the greatest part of that reproach on the first seven or eight months, while I was obliged to learn as well as to teach. The dissipation of Blandford, and the disputes of Portsmouth, consumed the hours which were not employed in the field; and amid the perpetual hurry of an inn, a barrack, or a guard-room, all literary ideas were banished from my mind. After this long fast, the

* Epist. Atticum, Lib. V. 15.

longest which I have ever known, I once more tasted at Dover the pleasures of reading and thinking; and the hungry appetite with which I opened a volume of Tully's philosophical works is still present to my memory. The last review of my Essay before its publication had prompted me to investigate the Nature of the Gods; my inquiries led me to the Histoire Critique du Manichéism of Beausobre, who discusses many deep questions of Pagan and Christian theology; and from this rich treasury of facts and opinions I deduced my own consequences, beyond the holy circle of the author. After this recovery I never relapsed into indolence; and my example might prove that in the life most averse to study some hours may be stolen, some minutes may be snatched. Amidst the tumult of Winchester camp I sometimes thought and read in my tent; in the more settled quarters of Devizes, Blandford, and Southampton I always secured a separate lodging and the necessary books; and in the summer of 1762, while the new militia was raising, I enjoyed at Beriton two or three months of literary repose.* In

* JOURNAL, *May* 8, 1762. — This was my birthday, on which I entered into the twenty-sixth year of my age. This gave me occasion to look a little into myself, and consider impartially my good and bad qualities. It appeared to me, upon this inquiry, that my character was virtuous, incapable of a base action, and formed for generous ones; but that it was proud, violent, and disagreeable in society. These qualities I must endeavor to cultivate, extirpate, or restrain, according to their different tendency. Wit I have none. My imagination is rather strong than pleasing; my memory both capacious and retentive. The shining qualities of my understanding are extensiveness and penetration; but I want both quickness and exactness. As to my situation in life, though I may sometimes repine at it, it perhaps is the best adapted to my character. I can command all the conveniences of life, and I can command too that independence (that first earthly blessing) which is hardly to be met with in a higher or lower fortune. When I talk of my situation, I must exclude that temporary one of being in the militia. Though I go through it with spirit and application, it is both unfit for and unworthy of me.

forming a new plan of study, I hesitated between the mathematics and the Greek language; both of which I had neglected since my return from Lausanne. I consulted a learned and friendly mathematician, Mr. George Scott, a pupil of De Moivre; and his map of a country which I have never explored may perhaps be more serviceable to others. As soon as I had given the preference to Greek, the example of Scaliger and my own reason determined me on the choice of Homer, the father of poetry, and the Bible of the ancients: but Scaliger ran through the Iliad in one-and-twenty days; and I was not dissatisfied with my own diligence for performing the same labor in an equal number of weeks. After the first difficulties were surmounted, the language of nature and harmony soon became easy and familiar, and each day I sailed upon the ocean with a brisker gale and a more steady course.

Ἐν δ' ἄνεμος πρῆσεν μέσον ἱστίον, ἀμφὶ δὲ κῦμα
Στείρῃ πορφύρεον μεγάλ' ἴαχε, νηὸς ἰούσης·
Ἡ δ' ἔῢεεν κατὰ κῦμα, διαπρήσσουσα κέλευθον.*

ILIAS, A. 481.

In the study of a poet who has since become the most intimate of my friends, I successively applied many passages and fragments of Greek writers; and among these I shall notice a life of Homer, in the Opuscula Mythologica of Gale, several books of the geography of Strabo, and the entire treatise of Longinus, which, from the title and the style, is equally worthy of the epithet of sublime. My grammatical

* Fair wind, and blowing fresh,
Apollo sent them; quick they rear'd the mast,
Then spread th' unsullied canvas to the gale,
And the wind fill'd it. Roar'd the sable flood
Around the bark, that ever as she went
Dash'd wide the brine, and scudded swift away.

COWPER'S *Homer.*

skill was improved, my vocabulary was enlarged; and in the militia I acquired a just and indelible knowledge of the first of languages. On every march, in every journey, Horace was always in my pocket, and often in my hand: but I should not mention his two critical epistles, the amusement of a morning, had they not been accompanied by the elaborate commentary of Dr. Hurd, now Bishop of Worcester. On the interesting subjects of composition and imitation of epic and dramatic poetry, I presumed to think for myself; and thirty close-written pages in folio could scarcely comprise my full and free discussion of the sense of the master and the pedantry of the servant.

After his oracle Dr. Johnson, my friend Sir Joshua Reynolds denies all original genius, any natural propensity of the mind to one art or science rather than another. Without engaging in a metaphysical or rather verbal dispute, I *know*, by experience, that from my early youth I aspired to the character of an historian. While I served in the militia, before and after the publication of my Essay, this idea ripened in my mind; nor can I paint in more lively colors the feelings of the moment than by transcribing some passages, under their respective dates, from a journal which I kept at that time.

(*In a short excursion from Dover.*)

Beriton, *April* 14, 1761. — Having thought of several subjects for an historical composition, I chose the expedition of Charles the Eighth of France into Italy. I read two memoirs of Mr. de Foncemagne in the Academy of Inscriptions (Tom. XVII. p. 539 – 607, and abstracted them. I likewise finished this day a dissertation in which I examine the right of Charles the Eighth to the crown of Naples, and the rival claims of the houses of Anjou and Arragon: it consists of ten folio pages, besides large notes.

(*In a week's excursion from Winchester camp.*)

BERITON, *August* 4, 1761. — After having long revolved subjects for my intended historical essay, I renounce my first thought of the expedition of Charles the Eighth, as too remote from us, and rather an introduction to great events than great and important in itself. I successively chose and rejected the crusade of Richard the First, the barons' wars against John and Henry the Third, the history of Edward the Black Prince, the lives and comparisons of Henry the Fifth and the Emperor Titus, the life of Sir Philip Sidney, and that of the Marquis of Montrose. At length I have fixed on Sir Walter Raleigh for my hero. His eventful story is varied by the characters of the soldier and sailor, the courtier and historian; and it may afford such a fund of materials as I desire, which have not yet been properly manufactured. At present I cannot attempt the execution of this work. Free leisure, and the opportunity of consulting many books, both printed and manuscript, are as necessary as they are impossible to be attained in my present way of life. However, to acquire a general insight into my subject and resources, I read the Life of Sir Walter Raleigh by Dr. Birch, his copious article in the General Dictionary by the same hand, and the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James the First in Hume's History of England.

(*In a month's absence from Devizes.*)

BERITON, *January*, 1762. — During this interval of repose I again turned my thoughts to Sir Walter Raleigh, and looked more closely into my materials. I read the two volumes in quarto of the Bacon papers, published by Dr. Birch; the Fragmenta Regalia of Sir Robert Naunton, Mallet's Life of Lord Bacon, and the political treatises of that great man in the first volume of his works, with many of his letters in the second; Sir William Monson's Naval Tracts; and the elaborate Life of Sir Walter Raleigh, which Mr. Oldys has prefixed to the best edition of his History of the World. My subject opens upon me, and in general improves upon a nearer prospect.

(*During my summer residence.*)

Beriton, *July* 26, 1762. — I am afraid of being reduced to drop my hero; but my time has not, however, been lost in the research of his story, and of a memorable era of our English annals. The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh, by Oldys, is a very poor performance; a servile panegyric, or flat apology, tediously minute, and composed in a dull and affected style. Yet the author was a man of diligence and learning, who had read everything relative to his subject, and whose ample collections are arranged with perspicuity and method. Excepting some anecdotes lately revealed in the Sidney and Bacon papers, I know not what I should be able to add. My ambition (exclusive of the uncertain merit of style and sentiment) must be confined to the hope of giving a good abridgment of Oldys. I have even the disappointment of finding some parts of this copious work very dry and barren; and these parts are unluckily some of the most characteristic: Raleigh's colony of Virginia, his quarrels with Essex, the true secret of his conspiracy, and, above all, the detail of his private life, the most essential and important to a biographer. My best resource would be in the circumjacent history of the times, and perhaps in some digressions artfully introduced, like the fortunes of the Peripatetic philosophy in the portrait of Lord Bacon. But the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First are the periods of English history which have been the most variously illustrated: and what new lights could reflect on a subject which has exercised the accurate industry of Birch, the lively and curious acuteness of Walpole, the critical spirit of Hurd, the vigorous sense of Mallet and Robertson, and the impartial philosophy of Hume? Could I even surmount these obstacles, I should shrink with terror from the modern history of England, where every character is a problem, and every reader a friend or an enemy; where a writer is supposed to hoist a flag of party, and is devoted to damnation by the adverse faction. Such would be *my* reception at home: and abroad the historian of Raleigh must encounter an indifference far more bitter than censure or re-

proach. The events of his life are interesting; but his character is ambiguous, his actions are obscure, his writings are English, and his fame is confined to the narrow limits of our language and our island. I must embrace a safer and more extensive theme.

There is one which I should prefer to all others, "The History of the Liberty of the Swiss," of that independence which a brave people rescued from the House of Austria, defended against a dauphin of France, and finally sealed with the blood of Charles of Burgundy. From such a theme, so full of public spirit, of military glory, of examples of virtue, of lessons of government, the dullest stranger would catch fire; what might not *I* hope, whose talents, whatsoever they may be, would be inflamed with the zeal of patriotism? But the materials of this history are inaccessible to me, fast locked in the obscurity of an old barbarous German dialect, of which I am totally ignorant, and which I cannot resolve to learn for this sole and peculiar purpose.

I have another subject in view, which is the contrast of the former history: the one a poor, warlike, virtuous republic, which emerges into glory and freedom; the other a commonwealth, soft, opulent, and corrupt, which by just degrees is precipitated from the abuse to the loss of her liberty: both lessons are perhaps equally instructive. This second subject is "The History of the Republic of Florence under the House of Medicis," a period of one hundred and fifty years, which rises or descends from the dregs of the Florentine democracy to the title and dominion of Cosmo de Medicis in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. I might deduce a chain of revolutions not unworthy of the pen of Vertot; singular men and singular events; the Medicis four times expelled and as often recalled; and the Genius of Freedom reluctantly yielding to the arms of Charles the Fifth and the policy of Cosmo. The character and fate of Savonarola, and the revival of arts and letters in Italy, will be essentially connected with the elevation of the family and the fall of the republic. The Medicis, "stirps quasi fataliter nata ad

instauranda vel fovenda studia," (Lipsius ad Germanos et Gallos, Epist. VIII.) were illustrated by the patronage of learning; and enthusiasm was the most formidable weapon of their adversaries. On this splendid subject I shall most probably fix; but *when* or *where* or *how* will it be executed? I behold in a dark and doubtful perspective,

"Res altâ terrâ, et caligine mersas."

The youthful habits of the language and manners of France had left in my mind an ardent desire of revisiting the Continent on a larger and more liberal plan. According to the law of custom, and perhaps of reason, foreign travel completes the education of an English gentleman: my father had consented to my wish, but I was detained above four years by my rash engagement in the militia. I eagerly grasped the first moments of freedom: three or four weeks in Hampshire and London were employed in the preparations of my journey, and the farewell visits of friendship and civility; my last act in town was to applaud Mallet's new tragedy of Elvira; a post-chaise conveyed me to Dover, the packet to Boulogne; and such was my diligence, that I reached Paris on the 28th of January, 1763, only thirty-six days after the disbanding of the militia. Two or three years were loosely defined for the term of my absence; and I was left at liberty to spend that time in such places and in such a manner as was most agreeable to my taste and judgment.

In this first visit I passed three months and a half (January 28 to May 9), and a much longer space might have been agreeably filled without any intercourse with the natives. At home we are content to move in the daily round of pleasure and business; and a scene which is always present is supposed to be within our knowledge, or at least within our power. But

in a foreign country curiosity is our business and our pleasure; and the traveller, conscious of his ignorance, and covetous of his time, is diligent in the search and the view of every object that can deserve his attention. I devoted many hours of the morning to the circuit of Paris and the neighborhood, to the visit of churches and palaces conspicuous by their architecture, to the royal manufactures, collections of books and pictures, and all the various treasures of art, of learning, and of luxury. An Englishman may hear without reluctance that in these curious and costly articles Paris is superior to London; since the opulence of the French capital arises from the defects of its government and religion. In the absence of Louis the Fourteenth and his successors, the Louvre has been left unfinished; but the millions which have been lavished on the sands of Versailles and the morass of Marli could not be supplied by the legal allowance of a British king. The splendor of the French nobles is confined to their town residences; that of the English is more usefully distributed in their country-seats; and we should be astonished at our own riches if the labors of architecture, the spoils of Italy and Greece, which are now scattered from Inverary to Wilton, were accumulated in a few streets between Marylebone and Westminster. All superfluous ornament is rejected by the cold frugality of the Protestants; but the Catholic superstition, which is always the enemy of reason, is often the parent of the arts. The wealthy communities of priests and monks expend their revenues in stately edifices; and the parish church of St. Sulpice, one of the noblest structures in Paris, was built and adorned by the private industry of a late curé. In this outset, and still more in the sequel of my tour, my eye was amused; but the pleasing

vision cannot be fixed by the pen; the particular images are darkly seen through the medium of five-and-twenty years, and the narrative of my life must not degenerate into a book of travels.

But the principal end of my journey was to enjoy the society of a polished and amiable people, in whose favor I was strongly prejudiced, and to converse with some authors whose conversation, as I fondly imagined, must be far more pleasing and instructive than their writings. The moment was happily chosen. At the close of a successful war the British name was respected on the Continent: —

"Clarum et venerabile nomen
Gentibus."

Our opinions, our fashions, even our games, were adopted in France; a ray of national glory illuminated each individual, and every Englishman was supposed to be born a patriot and a philosopher. For myself, I carried a personal recommendation; my name and my Essay were already known; the compliment of having written in the French language entitled me to some returns of civility and gratitude. I was considered as a man of letters, who wrote for amusement. Before my departure I had obtained from the Duke de Nivernois, Lady Hervey, the Mallets, Mr. Walpole, etc., many letters of recommendation to their private or literary friends. Of these epistles the reception and success were determined by the character and situation of the persons by whom and to whom they were addressed: the seed was sometimes cast on a barren rock, and it sometimes multiplied an hundred-fold in the production of new shoots, spreading branches, and exquisite fruit. But upon the whole, I had reason to praise the national urbanity, which from the court has diffused its gentle

influence to the shop, the cottage, and the schools. Of the men of genius of the age, Montesquieu and Fontenelle were no more; Voltaire resided on his own estate near Geneva; Rousseau in the preceding year had been driven from his hermitage of Montmorency; and I blush at my having neglected to seek in this journey the acquaintance of Buffon. Among the men of letters whom I saw, D'Alembert and Diderot held the foremost rank in merit, or at least in fame. I shall content myself with enumerating the well-known names of the Count de Caylus, of the Abbé de la Bleterie, Barthelemy, Reynal, Arnaud, of Messieurs de la Condamine, du Clos, de Ste. Palaye, de Bougainville, Caperonnier, de Guignes, Suard, etc., without attempting to discriminate the shades of their characters, or the degrees of our connection. Alone, in a morning visit, I commonly found the artists and authors of Paris less vain and more reasonable than in the circles of their equals, with whom they mingle in the houses of the rich. Four days in a week I had a place, without invitation, at the hospitable tables of Mesdames Geoffrin and du Bocage, of the celebrated Helvetius, and of the Baron d'Olbach. In these symposia the pleasures of the table were improved by lively and liberal conversation; the company was select, though various and voluntary.*

* Journal, *May*, 1763. — Furnished with a double letter of recommendation to the Count de Caylus, I expected to find in him a union of the man of quality and the man of letters. I saw him two or three times, and found him a simple, plain, good man, who received me with extreme kindness. If I have not profited by him, I attribute it less to his character than his manner of living. He rises early in the morning, visits the studies of artists all the day, and returns home at six o'clock in the evening to put on a *robe-de-chambre* and shut himself up in his cabinet. Where is the opportunity to receive friends?

If this introduction proved fruitless, there have been others as fertile

The society of Madame du Bocage was more soft and moderate than that of her rivals, and the evening conversations of M. de Forcemagne were supported by the good sense and learning of the principal members of the Academy of Inscriptions. The opera and the Italians I occasionally visited; but the French theatre, both in tragedy and comedy, was my daily and favorite amusement. Two famous actresses then divided the public applause. For my own part, I preferred the consummate art of the Clairon * to the intemperate sallies of the Dumesnil, which were extolled by her admirers as the genuine voice of nature and passion. Fourteen weeks insensibly stole away; but had I been rich and independent, I should have prolonged, and perhaps have fixed, my residence at Paris.

Between the expensive style of Paris and of Italy it was prudent to interpose some months of tranquil simplicity; and at the thoughts of Lausanne I again lived in the pleasures and studies of my early youth. Shaping my course through Dijon and Besançon, in the last of which places I was kindly entertained by my Cousin Acton, I arrived in the month of May, 1763, on the banks of the Leman Lake. It had been my

in consequences as agreeable in themselves. In a capital like Paris it is proper and necessary to have some letters of recommendation to distinguish you from the crowd; but as soon as the ice is broken, your acquaintances multiply, and your new friends take a pleasure in introducing you to others still more new. Happy effect of the light and amiable character of the French, who have established in Paris a freedom and ease in society unknown to antiquity, and still unpractised by other nations! At London a way must be made into people's houses, the doors of which are with difficulty opened, and their owners think they confer a favor by receiving you. Here they think that they confer one upon themselves. Thus I know more houses in Paris than in London. The fact seems improbable, but it is true.

* The reader will find in the Autobiography of Marmontel a charming account of this great actress, the first of the realists on the French stage.

intention to pass the Alps in the autumn, but such are the simple attractions of the place, that the year had almost expired before my departure from Lausanne in the ensuing spring. An absence of five years had not made much alteration in manners, or even in persons. My old friends, of both sexes, hailed my voluntary return, — the most genuine proof of my attachment. They had been flattered by the present of my book, the produce of their soil; and the good Pavilliard shed tears of joy as he embraced a pupil whose literary merit he might fairly impute to his own labors. To my old list I added some new acquaintance, and among the strangers I shall distinguish Prince Louis of Würtemberg, the brother of the reigning duke, at whose country-house near Lausanne I frequently dined: a wandering meteor, and at length a falling star, his light and ambitious spirit had successively dropped from the firmament of Prussia, of France, and of Austria; and his faults, which he styled his misfortunes, had driven him into philosophic exile in the Pays de Vaud. He could now moralize on the vanity of the world, the equality of mankind, and the happiness of a private station. His address was affable and polite; and as he had shone in courts and armies, his memory could supply, and his eloquence could adorn, a copious fund of interesting anecdotes. His first enthusiasm was that of charity and agriculture; but the sage gradually lapsed in the saint, and Prince Louis of Würtemberg is now buried in a hermitage near Mayence, in the last stage of mystic devotion.* By some ecclesiastical quarrel Voltaire

* JOURNAL, *August* 21. — I have dined at Benan's with Prince Louis of Würtemberg, being the second time. He invited me to meet the Prince de Ligne, who did not keep his appointment. The Prince of Würtemberg

had been provoked to withdraw himself from Lausanne, and retire to his castle at Ferney, where I again visited the poet and the actor, without seeking his more intimate acquaintance, to which I might now have pleaded a better title. But the theatre which he had founded, the actors whom he had formed, survived the loss of their master; and, recent from Paris, I attended with pleasure at the representation of several tragedies and comedies. I shall not descend to specify particular names and characters; but I cannot forget a private institution which will display the innocent freedom of Swiss manners. My favorite society had assumed, from the age of its members, the proud denomination

seems to like me much. To the easy and natural politeness which he displays to all the world, he adds, in regard to me, a tone of confidence, esteem, and even affection. With such manners it is impossible for a prince to displease you; and I find him possessed of wit, learning, and a great knowledge of the world. As he is acquainted with almost all the courts of Europe, he seasons his conversation with political and literary anecdotes which render it very amusing. I perceive that he possesses not the usual pride of a German prince; and the indignation which he manifested against one of his ancestors, who wished to sell a village in order to purchase a horse, induced me to hope that he was also destitute of the hard-heartedness. I believe, however, that he has always failed a little on the score of prudence; some ambitious and chimerical projects of which they accuse him,* his wandering life, his quarrels with his brother, his dissipations and disgrace at the Court of Vienna, all serve to convince me of it. His situation in this country supplies another proof of it. A prince of one of the first houses of Germany, exiled (may I say?) or retired into Switzerland, where he scarcely maintains the state of a private gentleman, cannot be thus without some little fault on his own part. His wife accompanies him in his retreat. She is a Saxon young lady, without either wealth or beauty, and, the public adds, even without intellect; but I have begun to discover the contrary. As the prince is *mishllied*, according to the haughty laws of the Empire, his children are excluded from the succession. Fortunately he has but one girl.

* Vide the Political Testament of the Marshal de Belleisle; a work worthy of a lackey, but of the lackey of a minister, and one who has heard many curious anecdotes.

of the Spring (*la société du printems*). It consisted of fifteen or twenty young unmarried ladies, of genteel though not of the very first families; the eldest perhaps about twenty; all agreeable, several handsome, and two or three of exquisite beauty. At each other's houses they assembled almost every day, without the control or even the presence of a mother or an aunt; they were trusted to their own prudence, among a crowd of young men of every nation in Europe. They laughed, they sang, they danced, they played at cards, they acted comedies; but in the midst of this careless gayety they respected themselves, and were respected by the men; the invisible line between liberty and licentiousness was never transgressed by a gesture, a word, or a look; and their virgin chastity was never sullied by the breath of scandal or suspicion: a singular institution, expressive of the innocent simplicity of Swiss manners. After having tasted the luxury of England and Paris, I could not have returned with satisfaction to the coarse and homely table of Madame Pavilliard; nor was her husband offended that I now entered myself as a *pensionnaire*, or boarder, in the elegant house of Mr. de Mésery, which may be entitled to a short remembrance, as it has stood above twenty years, perhaps, without a parallel in Europe. The house in which we lodged was spacious and convenient, in the best street, and commanding from behind a noble prospect over the country and the lake. Our table was served with neatness and plenty; the boarders were select; we had the liberty of inviting any guests at a stated price; and in the summer the scene was occasionally transferred to a pleasant villa about a league from Lausanne. The characters of master and mistress were happily suited to each other, and to their

situation. At the age of seventy-five Madame de Mésery, who has survived her husband, is still a graceful, I had almost said a handsome, woman. She was alike qualified to preside in her kitchen and her drawing-room; and such was the equal propriety of her conduct, that of two or three hundred foreigners none ever failed in respect, none could complain of her neglect, and none could ever boast of her favor. Mésery himself, of the noble family of De Crousaz, was a man of the world, a jovial companion, whose easy manners and natural sallies maintained the cheerfulness of his house. His wit could laugh at his own ignorance; he disguised, by an air of profusion, a strict attention to his interest; and in this situation he appeared like a nobleman who spent his fortune and entertained his friends. In this agreeable society I resided nearly eleven months (May, 1763, to April, 1764); and in this second visit to Lausanne, among a crowd of my English companions, I knew and esteemed Mr. Holroyd (now Lord Sheffield); and our mutual attachment was renewed and fortified in the subsequent stages of our Italian journey. Our lives are in the power of chance; and a slight variation on either side, in time or place, might have deprived me of a friend whose activity in the ardor of youth was always prompted by a benevolent heart, and directed by a strong understanding.*

* JOURNAL, *December* 1, 1763. — We all went to church to witness the ceremony of the day. It was the presentation of the bailiff at the great church, and the taking of the oath by the town of Lausanne, the vassals, and all the commonalty of the bailiage. The principal minister, Polier de Rollens, preached on this occasion. He astonished us; instead of those compositions, cold and without ideas, which he dignifies but too often with the name of sermons, he has displayed to-day the talents of an orator and the sentiments of a citizen. He has managed to speak to the ruler of his duties, and to the people of their rights, founded in both instances upon the will of freemen, who acknowledge a prince but not a

If my studies at Paris had been confined to the study of the world, three or four months would not

tyrant. He bestowed his panegyric sparingly, appropriately, and without triteness or insipidity. His gesture and delivery were adapted to the spirit of the subject, being full of dignity, devotion, and earnestness. After the sermon, the preacher repaired to the choir of the church, followed by the bailiff and the whole assembly. There he presented to the bailiage their new governor, whom he announced in a brief speech, which appeared to me to be pregnant with matter. The Bursar replied to him, but so low that I lost all which he said. Is the word "lost" properly employed here? As to the rest, never was ceremony conducted with less decorum; the disorder was frightful. The grenadiers of George Grand were present, only to keep out decent people and admit the mob.

LAUSANNE, *December* 18, 1763. — This was a Sunday of communion: religious ceremonies are well understood in this country. They are rare, and on that account the more respected. Old people indeed complain of the coldness of devotion; but nevertheless a day like this offers an edifying spectacle. No business, no assembly; even *whist* is forbidden, so necessary to the existence of a native of Lausanne.

For some days past I have lost my time, and it was fortunate when my time only was lost. I have played much, or at least I have betted much among the circle; and after some fortunate beginnings I was duly introduced to whist and to piquet, at the expense of forty louis-d'ors. I then had courage to stop all on a sudden; and, without allowing myself to be dazzled by the vain hopes of retrieving my loss, I have renounced high play, at least for some time. It would be better to renounce it forever. Many inconveniences result from it: loss of time, bad company, the continual agitation of hope and fear, which sooner or later affect the temper, and undermine the health. Can a taste for study and reflection associate itself with one for gaming? I have, moreover, been often led to remark, that the pain and pleasure are not equal, and that loss, somehow or another, produces more uneasiness than a similar gain affords satisfaction. The reason is evident: our expenditure is usually adapted to our income, and an unexpected loss leads to the privation of some necessary, or at least some convenience, upon which we have counted. The gain, on the contrary, is too uncertain and precarious to induce a man of sense to change his plan of living, and therefore merely produces a transient satisfaction. So much for wisdom *post factum*. If I had made these reflections some days sooner, I should have spared myself some disagreeable things in relation to my father, who may not feel disposed to reconcile himself to this increase of expense.

December 31. — Let me cast an eye upon the year 1763. Let me see how I have employed that portion of my existence which is never to return. The month of January was passed in the bosom of my family, to

have been unprofitably spent. My visits, however superficial, to the Academy of Medals and the public

whom it was necessary to sacrifice every moment immediately previous to my departure. During the journey, however, I found means to read the letters of "Busbequius," imperial minister at the Porte: they are as interesting as instructive. I remained at Paris from the 28th of January to the 9th of May, during all which time I studied nothing. Public amusements occupied me a great deal; and the habit of dissipation, acquired so easily in large towns, would not allow me to profit by the time of my stay. But in truth, although I turned over only a few books, an attention to all the curious objects which present themselves in a great capital, and conversation with some of the greatest men of the age, have instructed me in many things which I could not have found in books. The latter seven or eight months of my life have been more tranquil. As soon as I saw myself settled at Lausanne, I undertook a regular course of study of the ancient geography of Italy. My ardor did not flag for six weeks, until the end of the month of June. It was then that a journey to Geneva interrupted my attention; that the abode of Mésery produced a thousand distractions, and that the society of Saussure completed the sacrifice of my time. I resumed my labor, and this Journal, in the middle of August; and from that time to the beginning of November, I made the most of my time. I must confess that for the last two months my ardor has in some degree abated. In the first place, during this course of study, I have read—1. Nearly ten books of the geography of Strabo upon Italy twice over. 2. A part of the second book of the Natural History of Pliny. 3. The fourth book of the second chapter of Pomponius Mela. 4. The Itineraries of Antoninus, and of Jerusalem, in regard to that which concerns Italy. These I have read with the Comments of Wesseling, etc. I have constructed tables of all the great roads of Italy, reducing the Roman miles into English miles and French leagues, according to the calculations of D'Anville. 5. The History of the Great Roads of the Roman Empire, by M Bergier, 2 vols. 4to. 6. Some choice extracts from Cicero, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and the two Plinys. The Roma Vetus of Nardini, and many other tracts on the same subject, which compose nearly the whole of the fourth volume of the Treasure of Roman Antiquities by Grævius. 7. The Italia Antiqua of Cluvier, in 2 vols. folio. 8. The "Iter" or Journey of C. Rutilius Numatianus among the Gauls. 9. The catalogues of Virgil. 10. That of Silius Italicus. 11. The journey of Horace to Brundusium. N. B. I have perused the three last items three times over. 12. Treatise on the Measurement of the Itineraries by D'Anville, and some Memoirs of the Academy of Belles-Lettres. Secondly, as they made me wait at the library of Geneva for Nardini, I felt desirous of filling up the interval by a perusal of Juvenal, a poet whom I hitherto only knew by his reputa-

libraries opened a new field of inquiry; and the view of so many manuscripts of different ages and charac-

tion: I read him twice with pleasure and with care. Thirdly, during the year I have read some journals, and, among the rest, the Journal Étranger since its commencement; a volume of the Nouvelles of Bayle; and the thirty-five first volumes of the Bibliothèque Raisonnée. Fourthly, I have written a good deal of my Recueil Géographique de l'Italie, which is already tolerably ample, and sufficiently curious. Fifthly, I have not neglected this Journal, which has become a work: 214 pages in four months and a half; and some of these, the best filled up, form a something considerable; and, without resting upon detached observation, they will contain some learned and argumentative dissertations. That on the passage of Hannibal contains ten pages, and that on the Social War, a dozen. But these passages are too lengthy, and even the journal itself has need of reform, and requires the retrenchment of pieces which are foreign to its genuine plan. After having duly reflected as above, here follow some of the objects which I regard as belonging to it. First, all my domestic and private life, my amusements, my engagements, even my rambles, with all my reflections that turn upon subjects which are personal as regards myself; I allow that all this is interesting only to myself; but it is only for myself my Journal is written. Secondly, all which I learn from observation or conversation; but so that I record that only which I acquire from well-informed and veracious persons in relation to facts, or from the small number of those who merit the title of great men, as concerns sentiments and opinions. Thirdly, I will carefully note all that relates to the most important part of my studies; how many hours I have worked; how many pages I have written or read, with a brief account of the subjects on which they treat. Fourthly, I should be sorry to read without reflecting on what I read; without recording my digested judgment on my author, or without sifting with care their ideas and expressions. But all sorts of reading do not equally call for this. Some books may be run over, some be read, and others be studied. My remarks upon those of the first class need only be short and detached; they belong to my Journal, in which those arising out of the second class may also find a place, but only in proportion as they partake of the same character. Fifthly, my reflections upon the small number of choice authors, as they will be meditated with care, will naturally be rendered lengthy and profound. For these, and for the more extended and original pieces to which reading or meditation may give rise, I will form a separate repository. In the mean time I shall preserve its connection with the journal by constant references, which will mark the number of every piece, and the time and occasion of its composition. With these arrangements my Journal cannot but be useful. So exact an account of my time will make me better acquainted with its value, and

ters induced me to consult the two great Benedictine works, the Diplomatica of Mabillon, and the Palæographia of Montfauçon. I studied the theory without

will dissipate by its details the illusion which leads us to look only years and months in the face, and to despise hours and days. I say nothing of the pleasure. It is a very great one to be able to review every epoch of our lives, and to place ourselves as we please in the midst of all the better scenes in which we have performed a part ourselves, or seen parts performed by others.

April 6, 1764. — I was called up this morning by Pavilliard and Holroyd to stop the progress of a vexatious affair which passed at the ball after our departure. Guise, who has paid his court to Mademoiselle d'Illens for a long time past, beheld with great pain that Van Berken, a Hollander, appeared likely to supplant him. He replied to the polite attentions of his rival with rudeness, and at length, in a contest for the hand of Mademoiselle d'Illens, broke out against him in the most *mal-apropos* manner in the world, and treated him before everybody as an *impertinent*, etc. I learnt from Pavilliard that Van Berken had sent him a message, and that, the reply of Guise not having been satisfactory, they were to meet at five o'clock in the evening. In despair at perceiving my friend engaged in an affair from which he could not emerge blameless, I ran to the house of M. Crousaz, in which Van Berken resided. I soon found that a slight explanation, together with some apology on the part of Guise, would disarm him; and I proceeded to the latter with Holroyd, to induce him to give it. We have made him comprehend that the confession of a positive fault can never injure honor, and that his behavior to the ladies, as well as to Van Berken, was without excuse. I dictated for him a suitable billet, but without the least improper humility, which I carried to the Hollander. He gave up his intention on the spot, wrote a polite reply, and thanked me a thousand times for the part which I had performed. In truth, this gentleman was not difficult. After dinner I saw our ladies, to whom I also bore an apology. The mother will take no further notice of it to Guise, but Mademoiselle d'Illens is inconsolable at the blame which by this affair she may incur from the world. This negotiation has taken me up the whole day, but I could not better employ a day than in saving the lives, possibly, of two persons, and in preserving the reputation of a friend. As to the rest, I have seen something more of character. Guise is brave, sincere, and sensible, but of an impetuosity which is only the more dangerous for being suppressed on ordinary occasions. C—— is inconsequential as a child. De Salis exhibits an indifference which springs more from a deficiency of feeling than from an excess of reason. I have conceived a sincere friendship for Holroyd. He possesses great good sense and honorable sentiments, with a heart the best disposed in the world.

attaining the practice of the art: nor should I complain of the intricacy of Greek abbreviations and Gothic alphabets, since every day, in a familiar language, I am at a loss to decipher the hieroglyphics of a female note. In a tranquil scene which revived the memory of my first studies, idleness would have been less pardonable: the public libraries of Lausanne and Geneva liberally supplied me with books; and if many hours were lost in dissipation, many more were employed in literary labor. In the country, Horace and Virgil, Juvenal and Ovid, were my assiduous companions: but in town I formed and executed a plan of study for the use of my Transalpine expedition: the topography of old Rome, the ancient geography of Italy, and the science of medals. 1. I diligently read, almost always with a pen in my hand, the elaborate treatises of Nardini, Donatus, etc., which fill the fourth volume of the Roman Antiquities of Grævius. 2. I next undertook and finished the Italia Antiqua of Cluverius, a learned native of Prussia, who had measured on foot every spot, and has compiled and digested every passage of the ancient writers. These passages in Greek or Latin authors I perused in the text of Cluverius, in two folio volumes: but I separately read the descriptions of Italy by Strabo, Pliny, and Pomponius Mela, the catalogues of the Epic poets, the Itineraries of Wesseling's Antoninus, and the coasting voyage of Rutilius Numatianus; and I studied two kindred subjects in the Mesures Itinéraires of D'Anville, and the copious work of Bergier, Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain. From these materials I formed a table of roads and distances reduced to our English measure; filled a folio commonplace-book with my collections and remarks on the geography of Italy; and inserted in my

Journal many long and learned notes on the insulæ and populousness of Rome, the social war, the passage of the Alps by Hannibal, etc. 3. After glancing my eye over Addison's agreeable dialogues, I more seriously read the great work of Ezekiel Spanheim, De Præstantiâ et Usu Numismatum, and applied with him the medals of the kings and emperors, the families and colonies, to the illustration of ancient history. And thus was I armed for my Italian journey.*

I shall advance with rapid brevity in the narrative

* Lausanne, *April* 17, 1764. — Guise and I gave an excellent dinner, with plenty of wine, to Dupleix and several others. After dinner we stole off to pay some visits to the Grands, the Seigneux, and the D'Illens. My departure excites regret in many places; in the mean time, a little wine and a degree of exhilaration, for which I cannot altogether account, induced me to play the fool to a miracle before those young ladies. I said a thousand silly things to them, and we embraced on taking leave amidst smiles and laughter. Mésery gave us a very good supper, with a part of the company of the morning, increased by Bourgeois and Pavilliard. This supper, the various adieus, and above all that of Pavilliard, whom I truly regard, together with the preparations for my departure, occupied me until two in the morning.

I quit Lausanne with less regret than I did the first time. I now leave only acquaintances. It was the mistress and the friend whom I before deplored. Moreover, I then beheld Lausanne with the inexperienced eyes of a young man, who had scarcely reached the reasonable period of his existence, and who judged without the means of comparison. At present, I perceive an ill-built town in the midst of a beautiful country, enjoying peace and tranquillity, which its inhabitants mistake for liberty. An agreeable and well-educated people, who love society, which is very good here, and who admit foreigners with pleasure into their coteries, which would be much more pleasant if conversation did not give place to gaming. The women are handsome, and, notwithstanding the great liberty allowed them, very discreet. Possibly a little of their freedom may originate in the reasonable but uncertain idea of occasionally securing a foreign husband. The house of M. Mésery is delightful; the frank and generous character of the husband, the graces of the wife, a charming situation, excellent cheer, the company of their countrymen, and perfect liberty, make this abode delightful to all the English. How I wish I could find such another in London. I regret leaving Holroyd, but he will soon follow.

of this tour, in which somewhat more than a year (April, 1764, to May, 1765) was agreeably employed. Content with tracing my line of march, and slightly touching on my personal feelings, I shall waive the minute investigation of the scenes which have been viewed by thousands, and described by hundreds of our modern travellers. Rome is the great object of our pilgrimage; and, first, the journey, second, the residence, and, third, the return, will form the most proper and perspicuous division. 1. I climbed Mount Cenis, and descended into the plain of Piedmont, not on the back of an elephant, but on a light osier seat, in the hands of the dexterous and intrepid chairmen of the Alps. The architecture and government of Turin * presented the same aspect of tame and tire-

* Turin, *May* 11, 1764. — I must say two words regarding Turin and the sovereign who reigns there. When we regard the slow and successive accessions of the House of Savoy during eight hundred years, it must be admitted that its grandeur has been rather the work of prudence than of fortune. It supports itself in the same spirit as it has been created, — by wisdom, order, and economy. With the worst portion of the Alps, a plain fertile but very contracted, and a miserable island, which annually produces — shall I say? or costs? — him one hundred thousand livres, the King of Sardinia has obtained a place among the powers of Europe. He possesses strong places, an army which he has extended to fifty thousand men, and a numerous and brilliant court. In every department a spirit of activity is visible, regulated by an order which seeks both to make the most of advantageous circumstances, and to create them. Science, arts, buildings, manufactures, all are attended to; even navigation is not neglected. The king intends to make a fine port of Nice, and has invited an English captain, Atkins, to employ himself in his growing marine, which at present consists only of a vessel of fifty guns and a frigate of thirty. Both of them are Spanish prizes, purchased from the English. The frigate is the famous Hermione.

Genoa, *May* 22, 1764. — We arrived at Genoa at half past eight in the morning. Our road was properly the bed of a great torrent; but the hills around offered us the pleasing spectacle of a number of country-houses, very well formed, and ornamented with fine architecture and painting. The *coup d'œil* of Genoa and its port appeared to me to be very fine. After dinner we paid a visit to Mrs. MacCarlty, who is travelling

some uniformity; but the court was regulated with decent and splendid economy; and I was introduced

with her son, and to Celesia, with whom I had become well acquainted in London. I found his wife only at home, who received me in a very friendly manner. I am to dine there to-morrow, and to introduce Guise. Madame Celesia is very amiable; her character is gentle, and she possesses much wit and imagination. It seems to me that increasing years and a knowledge of the world have cured her of the slightly romantic turn in which she formerly indulged. I have always felt for her the esteem and compassion which she merits, and have experienced for her a friendship which borders upon tenderness. She is the daughter of the poet Mallet, and was driven by the tyranny of her mother-in-law into the arms of M. Celesia, envoy from Genoa to England, who married her, and soon after took her to his own country. She says that she is very happy, but that she shall always regret England.

May 23. — We dined with the Celesias, who loaded me with proofs of attention, and even of friendship; for I deem all that is done for Guise as a favor to myself. I discoursed a good deal with Celesia upon the affairs of the country, and, above all, upon the insurrection at Genoa in 1746, and upon the revolts in Corsica. Here follow some of the circumstances which have been told me: 1st. When the people made this effort, which was worthy of the Romans, they formed a council, called the Assembly of the People, which continued for nearly a year: there were two independent departments in the state. The senate regulated as usual all foreign affairs, and abandoned to this assembly the domestic government. The latter remained charged with the guardianship of liberty, gave its orders under pain of death, and retained an executioner, who took his station on the steps of a church, near a gibbet, which enabled him promptly to obey orders. The most singular affair is, that the people, who manifested such a taste for the supreme authority, soon became disgusted with its own leaders, and by degrees allowed its assembly to decay, and restored the reins of government to the nobility without dispute and without conditions. 2dly. If the Genoese have irritated the Corsicans, they have since endeavored to reconcile them. Four years ago they despatched an illustrious deputation, furnished with full powers to grant the insurgents all which they might demand. This was fruitless. The independent spirits born during the revolt, and scarcely remembering that they had ever been subjects of Genoa, listened only to the violent counsels of Paoli, who alone knew how to govern this unruly people. This famous chief, whose manners are still a little ferocious, equals by his natural talents the great men of antiquity. M. Celesia can only compare him with Cromwell. Like Cromwell, ambition takes the precedence in his regard of riches, which he despises, and of pleasures, to which he has never been accustomed; like him, the perpetual dictator of a newborn republic, he knows how to govern it by the shadow of a senate, of

to his Sardinian majesty Charles Emanuel, who, after the incomparable Frederick, held the second rank (*proximus longo tamen intervallo*) among the kings of Europe. The size and populousness of Milan could not surprise an inhabitant of London; but the fancy is amused by a visit to the Boromean Islands, an enchanted palace, a work of the fairies in the midst of a lake encompassed with mountains, and far removed from the haunts of men. I was less amused by the marble palaces of Genoa than by the recent

which he is the master; and like him, he knows how to inspire his troops with a religious fanaticism, which renders them invincible. The curés of the island are very useful instruments to him; and his address in this respect is the more singular, as religion has neither been the motive nor the pretext for the revolt. The most considerate part of the Genoese senate is weary of a war which has cost great sacrifices and degradation. It preserves only the maritime places, the territory of which is often bounded by their lines of fortification; and it would abandon with pleasure the Corsicans to themselves, if it did not fear the King of Sardinia. It is certain that the Court of Vienna has manifested a desire to acquire the island for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and possibly, but for the jealousy of France, might have obtained it.

June 3. — I have passed the whole morning at home. Happy moments of repose, of which we feel not the value until we have lived in a crowd! I have purchased the History of the Revolutions of Genoa. The style is not bad, without being that of Vertot; and the order is clear, without being able. There are very few abbreviators to whom Velleius Paterculus has bequeathed his secret of exhibiting his subject in grand masses. But in a political history I ought to be anxious for the most accurate ideas of the constitution of Genoa, of its laws, and its manners.

We dined with Celesia, who is always ill. At eight o'clock in the evening his father-in-law presented us to the doge, Brignoletti. He is an old man, very fat, with not the most intellectual air in the world. He knows a little French, but he spoke to us chiefly in Italian. He received us politely, but with a mixture of dignity which was in tolerable accordance with his serenity. His serenityship receives five thousand livres, and expends at least twenty-five thousand, for the pleasure of residing in a wretched house, out of which he cannot move without the permission of the senate, of being clothed with scarlet from head to foot, and of being waited upon by twelve pages of sixty years of age, habited in Spanish liveries.

memorials of her deliverance (in December, 1746) from the Austrian tyranny; and I took a military survey of every scene of action within the enclosure of her double walls. My steps were detained at Parma and Modena by the precious relics of the Farnese and Este collections: but, alas! the far greater part had been already transported, by inheritance or purchase, to Naples and Dresden. By the road of Bologna and the Apennine, I at last reached Florence, where I reposed from June to September, during the heat of the summer months.* In the gallery, and

* Florence, *June* 29, 1764.—This day was celebrated the festival of St. John, the protector of Florence. At seven in the morning we repaired to the Square of the Grand Duke, in order to witness the ceremony of the presentation of the homages, etc. At last the tower of St John advanced, more lofty and decorated than the others. The saint himself crowned the pinnacle. The niches at the sides were filled with various other saints, among whom St. Sebastian might be distinguished, bound to a pillar. All the saints were living men, who performed their parts with great propriety, except that, as the situation of St. John himself was a little precarious, they substituted a wooden figure for the boy who represented him on former occasions. This tower was followed by the Barbary horses, which raced in the afternoon, etc., etc.

In the afternoon we witnessed the race of the Barbary coursers; it took place in the Corso, a large and fine street, but which in many places is neither wide nor straight enough. We attended in the suite of our minister, Sir Horace Mann, at six o'clock in the evening. The Corso was already filled with many hundred carriages, which proceeded slowly, in order to add to the pomp of the grandest gala of Florence. It must be admitted that the equipages and dresses were magnificent and tasteful, and that altogether they formed the finest *coup d'œil* that can be imagined. In half an hour the carriages disappeared, and every one repaired to his window, his balcony, or his scaffold. We followed our minister to the lodge of the government, which was filled with all who were of the most distinction in Florence. We were received with the utmost politeness. By this change of scene the spectacle became less brilliant, but more singular, by the innumerable crowd of every rank who lined the two sides of a grand street, while the street itself was perfectly clear. It must be observed that everything took place without confusion, and that a handful of grenadiers sufficed to retain this vast assemblage in perfect order. The horses then passed along in procession to the lists; they

especially in the Tribune, I first acknowledged, at the feet of the Venus of Medicis, that the chisel may dispute the pre-eminence with the pencil; a truth in the fine arts which cannot on this side of the Alps be felt or understood.* At home I had taken some

amounted to fifteen, decorated with ribbons of different colors, and were conducted by grooms in the liveries of their owners. They appeared in general very fine, but, although denominated Barbs, they might be of any country: there was in particular an old English horse, twenty-three years old, which, however, usually bore away the prize. It was easy to discover, by the acclamations of the people, which were the favorites. When they arrived at the starting-post, they were ranged as equally as possible, with a cord drawn before them, which being suddenly dropped, they started. I saw them pass with a swiftness which the impetuosity natural to the horse, animated by the goad or spur (a sort of spiked ball, which strikes their sides as they run), sufficiently explained to me. I was, however, quite astonished at the composure with which they proceeded to the goal, as well as if mounted by the most able horsemen. We soon lost sight of them, and all the spectators fixed their eyes on the clock of the cathedral, in order to read the name of the conqueror in the illuminated signal which would be repeated there, and answer to the number of the victor horse. As if to dally the longer with public impatience, it happened that the numbers passed by until they reached thirteen, when the Prince Neri announced to the people (whose curiosity held them completely silent) that the colt of the Chevalier Alessandria had won the prize. In an instant this silence gave way to loud acclamations from thirty thousand spectators. Before the prize was delivered to the conqueror, it received a benediction with much ceremony in the Church of St. John. As well as I am able to judge, the horses finished their career of two miles in five minutes. The Great Devil (the English horse) arrived the second, and almost at the same moment as the first.

Considering only the swiftness of the horses, our races exceedingly excel these. On the other hand, the antiquity of the institution, the ardor of an entire population, who assist at them, the intervention of the prince, and even of religion, give a much more majestic air to the latter. It is perceptible that the Florentines cherish this spectacle as the sole vestige of their ancient liberty; it is a momentary animation which carries away all minds; and, since the games of the ancients, it is probably the only spectacle of a public nature in which the whole state unites to receive amusement by the care and under the sanction of its magistracy.

* *July* 16. — We have made our eighth visit to the gallery, etc., etc., etc. I am about to speak only of the valuable statues and antique busts, placed alternately in such a manner that a statue is always accompanied

lessons of Italian; on the spot I read, with a learned native, the classics of the Tuscan idiom; but the

by two busts. The latter probably form the most precious contents of the gallery, since they supply a complete sequence of all the emperors, from Julius and Augustus Cæsar to Caracalla, without reckoning several of the successors of the latter, a great many empresses, with various busts which have been assigned to the philosophers and poets of Greece on the strength of certain vague and indefinite descriptions of their persons, which have been left us by the ancients. It affords a lively pleasure to follow the progress and decline of the arts, and to run through this course of original portraits of the masters of the world. Their features are more observable here than upon their medals, the field for which is too small. I allow that it is by the aid of medals that we recognize them in this state; I therefore wish that it was the practice to place a drawer full of these medals in the pedestal of every bust, which would enable the curious to derive much pleasure from the comparison. To all this accessory merit, many of these busts add that which is derived from the great skill of the artist. Without reviewing the whole of them like Cochin, I will observe upon those which by some singularity have attracted me. 1. Julius Cæsar. It is remarkable. All his features are contracted, and the air of the countenance bears the most striking character of old age and decay; and we can scarcely comprehend that it is the bust of a man who died in his fifty-sixth year. I have not discovered the baldness of his head, although his forehead appears a little bare of hair; neither have I observed the crown of laurel beneath which the hero concealed a defect at which he was weak enough to blush. It is true that most of the heads of the men in this series are without ornament. 2. Cicero. A long neck, a thin face with many wrinkles, a complexion a little yellow (which proceeds from the color of the marble), all announce the strength and the labor of the mind rather than that of the body. The sculptor has placed a pea upon the left cheek, which, as it is pleasingly done, is merely an agreeable mark that serves to point him out. But although the name was hereditary, the mark (*cicer*) was not. 3. Agrippa. This is quite a contrast to Cicero, although possibly as fine in its way. It is of a grand and bold character. A face ample and square, with marked and prominent features; large eyes, but seated deeply in the head; hair which covers half the forehead, — all inspire the idea of force and vigor, and present a whole which is rather terrible than agreeable. He is placed among the emperors whom he assisted to seat upon the throne of the world. 4. Sappho. Sculpture was too imperfect, in the sixth century before Christ, to allow us to regard the head of this celebrated woman as an original: I am still less inclined to believe it, because Sappho, who shone more in mind than person, certainly possessed not this fine oval visage, although a little rounded by the plumpness which

shortness of my time, and the use of the French language, prevented my acquiring any facility of

the sculptor has here bestowed upon it. This piece possesses great beauty. 5. Caligula. This bust, which is of a free and bold execution, acquires additional value by the perfect and exact resemblance which it bears to the medals of this tyrant. For a man who died in his thirtieth year, his features are extremely mature. 6. Nero. There is much expression here, but of a nature which is somewhat confused. Ought I to say it, and to say it here? Nero has never shocked me so much as Tiberius, Caligula, and Domitian. He had many vices, but he was not without virtues. I perceive in his history but few traits of studied wickedness. He was cruel, but it was rather from fear than inclination. 7. Seneca. A most esteemed production, and worthy to be so. His flesh-deserted skin appears merely to cover bones and muscles, which are rendered with extraordinary truth, while his veins are conduits which seem destitute of blood. The whole character of this bust announces an aged man, and possibly an aged man expiring. 8. Galba. A very fine bust. 9. Otho. This bust possesses no other merit than that of rarity. I am surprised at its preservation. A thousand accidents may bury and preserve a piece of money, but how has it happened that any one would run a risk to preserve the odious bust of this shadow of an emperor? 10. Vitellius. The head of this stupid beast and glutton is overloaded with flesh. It is also remarkable that the statues of this emperor are not more uncommon. I suppose Vespasian despised him too much to destroy them. 11. Vespasian. If nature ought to be the model of sculptors, this head is of marvellous beauty. Nothing can be more natural than the contour, nothing more gracious than the air, at once animated, tranquil, and majestic. It is truly a human countenance; and, although rather ugly than handsome, it is good and interesting. I am persuaded that the resemblance was striking. 12. Berenice. The hair of this queen is curled very skilfully, yet disposed with a great appearance of negligence. If she was not more handsome than she is represented here, it is difficult to comprehend the passion of Titus. 13. Domitia. The manner in which her hair is collected on her forehead, in a number of little detached curls, gives them, according to Cochin, very much the appearance of a sponge. We paused at the termination of the Twelve Cæsars, a division which originated with Suetonius rather than with reason. The six Cæsars would have been more natural.

June 17. — We have made our ninth visit to the gallery, and here follows the remainder of the busts which we have reviewed. 14. Trajan. An easy and natural bust. I have discovered in the physiognomy a satirical smile, which much surprises me. The head is turned a great deal on one side; but I cannot recollect a single bust of which the head is placed in a regular attitude. The sculptors have properly thought that a

speaking; and I was a silent spectator in the conversations of our envoy, Sir Horace Mann, whose

slight deviation from the right line which is traced by nature gives more of grace and soul to their figures. 15. Hadrian. This bust is very fine. We here behold, agreeably to the testimony of historians, that this prince was the first who allowed his beard to grow. In the mean time he had it cut occasionally, and did not pique himself upon carrying that long, pendent, and well-nourished beard, which formed the great pride of the philosophers of this age. With respect to the hair, the first emperors wore it short, dressed with very little care, and falling upon the forehead. Upon the bust of Otho we perceive the hair dressed in great curls in front, a fashion of which that prince was the inventor. All this regards the emperors only. Seneca, who affected philosophy, has much hair and a beard. 16. Antinous. The bust of this minion of Hadrian is very fine. The countenance is elegantly formed, with a mixture of force and sweetness. The shoulders, the bosom, and the paps are treated with peculiar softness. The finest *embonpoint* injures not, in this instance, the grace of the contour. This bust, which is larger than life, is altogether antique, a rare and almost unique circumstance. The whole, or most of them, have the head alone antique, of which some part has generally been restored, and the nose has almost always been broken. It is with Antinous that the eyes of the busts begin to exhibit eyeballs, although in this instance scarcely perceptible. It is impossible to conceive to what an extent the eyeball gives life and expression to the whole, and animates every feature. It was right that this aid should be afforded to sculpture, when it touched upon the period of its decline. 17. Antoninus Pius. It abounds with truth of expression, especially the upper part of the face, the forehead, and the eyes. Antoninus adds to his beard a pair of small curled mustaches. 18. Marcus Aurelius. There are three of these; that which represents him young is the best. We may remark in all this family the same style of sculpture, that is to say, greater beauty of detail, with a less striking *tout ensemble*. 19. Annius Verus. It is a young child, and truly a *chef-d'œuvre* A small round face, sparkling with the graces of joy and innocence. We should never be weary of beholding it. 20. A bust much larger than life. This is a face young, although fully formed, and very handsome; it lifts up its eyes towards heaven with the finest and strongest expression of grief and indignation. It is said to be Alexander about to expire. Could the assertion be adequately authenticated, we might flatter ourselves with possessing an unique production from the hand of Lysippus, the only sculptor whom Alexander allowed to carve him in marble. In this *chef-d'œuvre* of nobleness, simplicity, and expression, there is nothing which contradicts the age of Alexander, or the opinion that it might be formed by Lysippus. 21. Pertinax. This appears to me fine. 22. Clodius Albinus. It is of alabaster; and the

most serious business was that of entertaining the English at his hospitable table. After leaving Florence I compared the solitude of Pisa with the industry of Lucca and Leghorn, and continued my journey through Sienna to Rome, where I arrived in the beginning of October. 2. My temper is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel I have ever scorned to affect. But, at the distance of twenty-five years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the *eternal city*. After a sleepless night I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus *stood*, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation. My guide was Mr. Byers, a Scotch antiquary of experience and taste; but in the daily labor of eighteen weeks the powers of attention were sometimes fatigued, till I was myself qualified, in a last review, to select and study the capital works of ancient and modern art. Six weeks were borrowed for my tour of Naples, the most populous of cities relative to its

merit of good workmanship is combined with that of the greatest rarity. When we call to mind that this shadow of royalty was followed by the reign of twenty years of a cruel and implacable enemy, the cause of this scarcity is easily understood. 23. Septimus Severus. It is good, but I prefer the style to the execution of this bust. 24. Geta. The representation of this child is very pretty, but it appears more mature than Annius Verus. 25. Caracalla. Good, but in my eyes a little dry. It was now that the Roman sculpture declined, together with the architecture, to which it is probably more closely allied than with painting. I believe that these last pieces are by artists who still existed of the golden age of the Antonines, and who formed no pupils for the iron one of the Severuses, under whom the government became truly military and despotic. The last busts in the series are, 26, Gallienus, and 27, Eliogabalus. The whole of the busts in the galleries amount to ninety-two.

size, whose luxurious inhabitants seem to dwell on the confines of paradise and hell-fire. I was presented to the boy-king by our new envoy, Sir William Hamilton, who, wisely diverting his correspondence from the Secretary of State to the Royal Society and British Museum, has elucidated a country of such inestimable value to the naturalist and antiquarian. On my return I fondly embraced, for the last time, the miracles of Rome; but I departed without kissing the foot of Rezzonico (Clement XIII.), who neither possessed the wit of his predecessor Lambertini, nor the virtues of his successor Ganganelli. 3. In my pilgrimage from Rome to Loretto, I again crossed the Apennine; from the coast of the Adriatic I traversed a fruitful and populous country, which could alone disprove the paradox of Montesquieu, that modern Italy is a desert. Without adopting the exclusive prejudice of the natives, I sincerely admire the paintings of the Bologna school. I hastened to escape from the sad solitude of Ferrara, which in the age of Cæsar was still more desolate. The spectacle of Venice afforded some hours of astonishment; the University of Padua is a dying taper; but Verona still boasts her amphitheatre; and his native Vicenza is adorned by the classic architecture of Palladio: the road of Lombardy and Piedmont (did Montesquieu find them without inhabitants?) led me back to Milan, Turin, and the passage of Mount Cenis, where I again crossed the Alps on my way to Lyons.

The use of foreign travel has been often debated as a general question; but the conclusion must be finally applied to the character and circumstances of each individual. With the education of boys, *where* or *how* they may pass over some juvenile years with the least

mischief to themselves or others, I have no concern. But after supposing the previous and indispensable requisites of age, judgment, a competent knowledge of men and books, and a freedom from domestic prejudices, I will briefly describe the qualifications which I deem most essential to a traveller. He should be endowed with an active, indefatigable vigor of mind and body, which can seize every mode of conveyance, and support with a careless smile every hardship of the road, the weather, or the inn. The benefits of foreign travel will correspond with the degrees of these qualifications; but in this sketch those to whom I am known will not accuse me of framing my own panegyric. It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter,* that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire: and, though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work.

I had not totally renounced the southern provinces of France, but the letters which I found at Lyons were expressive of some impatience. Rome and Italy had satiated my curious appetite, and I was now ready to return to the peaceful retreat of my family and books. After a happy fortnight, I reluctantly left Paris, embarked at Calais, again landed at Dover, after an interval of two years and five months, and hastily drove through the summer dust and solitude of London. On

* Now the Church of the Zocolants, or Franciscan friars.

the 25th of June, 1765, I arrived at my father's house; and the five years and a half between my travels and my father's death (1770) are the portion of my life which I passed with the least enjoyment, and which I remember with the least satisfaction. Every spring I attended the monthly meeting and exercise of the militia at Southampton; and by the resignation of my father and the death of Sir Thomas Worsley, I was successively promoted to the rank of major and lieutenant-colonel commandant; but I was each year more disgusted with the inn, the wine, the company, and the tiresome repetition of annual attendance and daily exercise. At home, the economy of the family and farm still maintained the same creditable appearance. My connection with Mrs. Gibbon was mellowed into a warm and solid attachment; my growing years abolished the distance that might yet remain between a parent and a son; and my behavior satisfied my father, who was proud of the success, however imperfect in his own lifetime, of my literary talents.

The renewal, or perhaps the improvement, of my English life was imbittered by the alteration of my own feelings. At the age of twenty-one I was, in my proper station of a youth, delivered from the yoke of education, and delighted with the comparative state of liberty and affluence. My filial obedience was natural and easy; and in the gay prospect of futurity, my ambition did not extend beyond the enjoyment of my books, my leisure, and my patrimonial estate, undisturbed by the cares of a family and the duties of a profession. But in the militia I was armed with power; in my travels I was exempt from control; and as I approached, as I gradually passed my thirtieth year, I began to feel the desire of being master in my own house. The most

gentle authority will sometimes frown without reason, the most cheerful submission will sometimes murmur without cause; and such is the law of our imperfect nature that we must either command or obey, — that our personal liberty is supported by the obsequiousness of our own dependents. While so many of my acquaintance were married or in Parliament, or advancing with a rapid step in the various roads of honor and fortune, I stood alone, immovable and insignificant; for after the monthly meeting of 1770, I had even withdrawn myself from the militia by the resignation of an empty and barren commission. My temper is not susceptible of envy, and the view of successful merit has always excited my warmest applause. The miseries of a vacant life were never known to a man whose hours were insufficient for the inexhaustible pleasure of study. But I lamented that at the proper age I had not embraced the lucrative pursuits of the law or of trade, the chances of civil office or India adventure, or even the fat slumbers of the church; and my repentance became more lively as the loss of time was more irretrievable. Experience showed me the use of grafting my private consequence on the importance of a great professional body, the benefits of those firm connections which are connected by hope and interest, by gratitude and emulation, by the mutual exchange of service and favors. From the emoluments of a profession I might have derived an ample fortune, or a competent income, instead of being stinted to the same narrow allowance, to be increased only by an event which I sincerely deprecated. The progress and the knowledge of our domestic disorders aggravated my anxiety, and I began to apprehend that I might be left in my old age without the fruits either of industry or inheritance.

In the first summer after my return, whilst I enjoyed at Beriton the society of my friend Deyverdun, our daily conversations expatiated over the field of ancient and modern literature; and we freely discussed my studies, my first Essay, and my future projects. The Decline and Fall of Rome I still contemplated at an awful distance; but the two historical designs which had balanced my choice were submitted to his taste; and in the parallel between the revolutions of Florence and Switzerland, our common partiality for a country which was *his* by birth, and *mine* by adoption, inclined the scale in favor of the latter. According to the plan which was soon conceived and digested, I embraced a period of two hundred years, from the association of the three peasants of the Alps to the plenitude and prosperity of the Helvetic body in the sixteenth century. I should have described the deliverance and victory of the Swiss, who have never shed the blood of their tyrants but in a field of battle; the laws and manners of the confederate states; the splendid trophies of the Austrian, Burgundian, and Italian wars; and the wisdom of a nation which, after some sallies of martial adventure, has been content to guard the blessings of peace with the sword of freedom.

> "Manus hæc inimica tyrannis
> Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietum."

My judgment, as well as my enthusiasm, was satisfied with the glorious theme; and the assistance of Deyverdun seemed to remove an inseparable obstacle. The French or Latin memorials, of which I was not ignorant, are inconsiderable in number and weight; but in the perfect acquaintance of my friend with the German language I found the key of a more valuable collection.

The most necessary books were procured; he translated, for my use, the folio volume of Schilling, a copious and contemporary relation of the war of Burgundy; we read and marked the most interesting parts of the great chronicle of Tschudi; and by his labor, or that of an inferior assistant, large extracts were made from the History of Lauffer and the Dictionary of Lew; yet such was the distance and delay, that two years elapsed in these preparatory steps; and it was late in the third summer (1767) before I entered, with these slender materials, on the more agreeable task of composition. A specimen of my History, the first book, was read the following winter in a literary society of foreigners in London; and as the author was unknown I listened, without observation, to the free strictures and unfavorable sentence of my judges.* The momentary sensa-

* Mr. Hume seems to have a different opinion of this work.

From MR. HUME *to* MR. GIBBON.

SIR: — It is but a few days ago since M. Deyverdun put your manuscript into my hands, and I have perused it with great pleasure and satisfaction. I have only one objection, derived from the language in which it is written. Why do you compose in French, and carry fagots into the wood, as Horace says with regard to Romans who wrote in Greek? I grant that you have a like motive to those Romans, and adopt a language much more generally diffused than your native tongue. But have you not remarked the fate of those two ancient languages in following ages? The Latin, though then less celebrated and confined to more narrow limits, has in some measure outlived the Greek, and is now more generally understood by men of letters. Let the French, therefore, triumph in the present diffusion of their tongue. Our solid and increasing establishments in America, where we need less dread the inundation of barbarians, promise a superior stability and duration to the English language.

Your use of the French tongue has also led you into a style more poetical and figurative, and more highly colored, than our language seems to admit of in historical productions; for such is the practice of French writers, particularly the more recent ones, who illuminate their pictures more than custom will permit us. On the whole, your history, in my opinion, is written with spirit and judgment: and I exhort you very

tion was painful; but their condemnation was ratified by my cooler thoughts. I delivered my imperfect sheets to the flames,* and forever renounced a design in which some expense, much labor, and more time had been so vainly consumed. I cannot regret the loss of a slight and superficial essay; for such the work must have been in the hands of a stranger, uninformed by the scholars and statesmen, and remote from the libraries and archives, of the Swiss republics. My ancient habits, and the presence of Deyverdun, encouraged me to write in French for the Continent of Europe; but I was conscious myself that my style, above prose and below poetry, degenerated into a verbose and turgid declamation. Perhaps I may impute the failure to the injudicious choice of a foreign language. Perhaps I may suspect that the language itself is ill adapted to sustain the vigor and dignity of an important narrative. But if France, so rich in literary merit, had produced a great original historian, his genius would have formed and fixed the idiom to the proper tone, the peculiar mode of historical eloquence.

It was in search of some liberal and lucrative employment that my friend Deyverdun had visited England. His remittances from home were scanty and

earnestly to continue it. The objections that occurred to me on reading it were so frivolous, that I shall not trouble you with them, and should, I believe, have a difficulty to recollect them.

I am, with great esteem, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

DAVID HUME.

London, 24th of Oct., 1767.

* He neglected to burn them. He left at Sheffield Place the introduction, or first book, in forty-three pages folio, written in a very small hand, besides a considerable number of notes. Mr. Hume's opinion, expressed in the letter in the last note, perhaps may justify the publication of it. S.

precarious. My purse was always open, but it was often empty; and I bitterly felt the want of riches and power, which might have enabled me to correct the errors of his fortune. His wishes and qualification solicited the station of the travelling governor of some wealthy pupil; but every vacancy provoked so many eager candidates, that for a long time I struggled without success; nor was it till after much application that I could even place him as a clerk in the office of the Secretary of State. In a residence of several years he never acquired the just pronunciation and familiar use of the English tongue, but he read our most difficult authors with ease and taste: his critical knowledge of our language and poetry was such as few foreigners have possessed; and few of our countrymen could enjoy the theatre of Shakespeare and Garrick with more exquisite feeling and discernment. The consciousness of his own strength, and the assurance of my aid, emboldened him to imitate the example of Dr. Maty, whose Journal Brittannique was esteemed and regretted; and to improve his model by uniting with the transactions of literature a philosophical view of the arts and manners of the British nation. Our journal for the year 1767, under the title of "Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne," was soon finished and sent to the press. For the first article, Lord Lyttelton's History of Henry II., I must own myself responsible; but the public has ratified my judgment of that voluminous work, in which sense and learning are not illuminated by a ray of genius. The next specimen was the choice of my friend, the "Bath Guide," a light and whimsical performance, of local, and even verbal, pleasantry. I started at the attempt: he smiled at my fears: his courage was justified by success; and a mas-

ter of both languages will applaud the curious felicity with which he has transfused into French prose the spirit, and even the humor, of the English verse. It is not my wish to deny how deeply I was interested in the Mémoires, of which I need not surely be ashamed; but at the distance of more than twenty years, it would be impossible for me to ascertain the respective shares of the two associates. A long and intimate communication of ideas had cast our sentiments and style in the same mould. In our social labors we composed and corrected by turns; and the praise which I might honestly bestow would fall perhaps on some article or passage most properly my own. A second volume (for the year 1768) was published of these Mémoires. I will presume to say that their merit was superior to their reputation; but it is not less true that they were productive of more reputation than emolument. They introduced my friend to the protection, and myself to the acquaintance of the Earl of Chesterfield, whose age and infirmities secluded him from the world; and of Mr. David Hume, who was under-secretary to the office in which Deyverdun was more humbly employed. The former accepted a dedication (April 12, 1769), and reserved the author for the future education of his successor: the latter enriched the Journal with a reply to Mr. Walpole's Historical Doubts, which he afterwards shaped into the form of a note. The materials of the third volume were almost completed, when I recommended Deyverdun as governor to Sir Richard Worsley, a youth, the son of my old lieutenant-colonel, who was lately deceased. They set forward on their travels; nor did they return to England till some time after my father's death.

My next publication was an accidental sally of love

and resentment; of my reverence for modest genius, and my aversion for insolent pedantry. The sixth book of the Æneid is the most pleasing and perfect composition of Latin poetry. The descent of Æneas and the Sibyl to the infernal regions, to the world of spirits, expands an awful and boundless prospect, from the nocturnal gloom of the Cumæan grot,

"Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbram,"

to the meridian brightness of the Elysian fields,

"Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo,"

from the dreams of simple nature to the dreams, alas! of Egyptian theology, and the philosophy of the Greeks. But the final dismission of the hero through the ivory gate, whence

"Falsa ad cœlum mittunt insomnia manes,"

seems to dissolve the whole enchantment, and leaves the reader in a state of cold and anxious scepticism. This most lame and impotent conclusion has been variously imputed to the taste or irreligion of Virgil; but, according to the more elaborate interpretation of Bishop Warburton, the descent to hell is not a false but a mimic scene, which represents the initiation of Æneas, in the character of a lawgiver, to the Eleusinian mysteries. This hypothesis, a singular chapter in the Divine Legation of Moses, had been admitted by many as true; it was praised by all as ingenious; nor had it been exposed in a space of thirty years to a fair and critical discussion. The learning and the abilities of the author had raised him to a just eminence; but he reigned the dictator and the tyrant of the world of literature. The real merit of Warburton

was degraded by the pride and presumption with which he pronounced his infallible decrees; in his polemic writings he lashed his antagonists without mercy or moderation; and his servile flatterers (see the base and malignant essay on the Delicacy of Friendship),* exalting the assaulted master-critic far above Aristotle and Longinus, assaulted every modest dissenter who refused to consult the oracle and to adore the idol. In a land of liberty such despotism must provoke a general opposition, and the zeal of opposition is seldom candid or impartial. A late professor of Oxford (Dr. Louth), in a pointed and polished epistle (August 31, 1745), defended himself, and attacked the bishop; and, whatsoever might be the merits of an insignificant controversy, his victory was clearly established by the silent confusion of Warburton and his slaves. *I* too, without any private offence, was ambitious of breaking a lance against the giant's shield; and in the beginning of the year 1770 my Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid were sent, without my name, to the press. In this short essay, my first English publication, I aimed my strokes against the person and the hypothesis of Bishop Warburton. I proved, at least to my own satisfaction, that the ancient lawgivers did not invent the mysteries; and that Æneas was never invested with the office of lawgiver; that there is not any argument, any circumstance, which can melt a fable into allegory, or remove the scene from the Lake Avernus to the Temple of Ceres; that such a wild supposition is equally injurious to the poet and the man; that if Virgil was not initiated, he could not, if he were, he would not, reveal the secrets of the ini-

* By Hurd, afterwards Bishop of Worcester.

tiation; that the anathema of Horace (*vetabo qui Cereris sacrum vulgarit*, etc.) at once attests his own ignorance and the innocence of his friend. As the Bishop of Gloucester and his party maintained a discreet silence, my critical disquisition was soon lost among the pamphlets of the day; but the public coldness was overbalanced to my feelings by the weighty approbation of the last and best editor of Virgil, Professor Heyne of Göttingen, who acquiesces in my confutation, and styles the unknown author, doctus . . . . et elegantissimus Britannus." But I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing the favorable judgment of Mr. Hayley, himself a poet and a scholar: "An intricate hypothesis, twisted into a long and labored chain of quotation and argument, the Dissertation on the Sixth Book of Virgil remained some time unrefuted. . . . . At length a superior, but anonymous critic arose, who, in one of the most judicious and spirited essays that our nation has produced on a point of classical literature, completely overturned this ill-founded edifice, and exposed the arrogance and futility of its assuming architect." He even condescends to justify an acrimony of style which had been gently blamed by the more unbiassed German, "Paullo acrius quam relis perstrinxit." * But I cannot forgive myself the contemptuous treatment of a man who, with all his faults, was entitled to my esteem; † and

* The editor of the Warburtonian tracts, Dr. Parr (p. 192) considers the allegorical interpretation "as completely refuted in a most clear, elegant, and decisive work of criticism; which could not, indeed, derive authority from the greatest name, but to which the greatest name might with propriety have been affixed."

† The Divine Legation of Moses is a monument, already crumbling in the dust, of the vigor and weakness of the human mind. If Warburton's new argument proved anything, it would be a demonstration against the legislator who left his people without the knowledge of a future state.

I can less forgive, in a personal attack, the cowardly concealment of my name and character.

In the fifteen years between my Essay on the Study of Literature and the first volume of the Decline and Fall (1761 – 1776) this criticism on Warburton, and some articles in the Journal, were my sole publications. It is more especially incumbent on me to mark the employment or to confess the waste of time from my travels to my father's death, an interval in which I was not diverted by any professional duties from the labors and pleasures of a studious life. 1. As soon as I was released from the fruitless task of the Swiss revolutions (1768) I began gradually to advance from the wish to the hope, from the hope to the design, from the design to the execution, of my historical work, of whose limits and extent I had yet a very inadequate notion. The Classics, as low as Tacitus, the younger Pliny, and Juvenal, were my old and familiar companions. I insensibly plunged into the ocean of the Augustan history; and in the descending series I investigated, with my pen almost always in my hand, the original records, both Greek and Latin, from Dion Cassius to Ammianus Marcellinus, from the reign of Trajan to the last age of the Western Cæsars. The subsidiary rays of medals, and inscriptions of geography and chronology, were thrown on their proper objects; and I applied the collections of Tillemont, whose inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius, to fix and arrange within my reach the loose and scattered atoms of historical information. Through the darkness of

But some episodes of the work, on the Greek philosophy, the hieroglyphics of Egypt, etc., are entitled to the praise of learning, imagination, and discernment.

the Middle Ages I explored my way in the Annals and Antiquities of Italy of the learned Muratori, and diligently compared them with the parallel or transverse lines of Sigonius and Maffei, Baronius and Pagi, till I almost grasped the ruins of Rome in the fourteenth century, without suspecting that this final chapter must be attained by the labor of six quartos and twenty years. Among the books which I purchased, the Theodosian Code, with the commentary of James Godefroy, must be gratefully remembered. I used it (and much I used it) as a work of history rather than of jurisprudence: but in every light it may be considered as a full and capacious repository of the political state of the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. As I believed, and as I still believe, that the propagation of the gospel, and the triumph of the Church, are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and contrasted the narratives and apologies of the Christians themselves, with the glances of candor or enmity which the Pagans have cast on the rising sects. The Jewish and heathen testimonies, as they are collected and illustrated by Dr. Lardner, directed, without superseding, my search of the originals; and in an ample dissertation on the miraculous darkness of the Passion, I privately drew my conclusions from the silence of an unbelieving age. I have assembled the preparatory studies directly or indirectly relative to my history; but, in strict equity, they must be spread beyond this period of my life, over the two summers (1771 and 1772) that elapsed between my father's death and my settlement in London. 2. In a free conversation with books and men it would be endless to enumerate the names and char-

acters of all who are introduced to our acquaintance; but in this general acquaintance we may select the degrees of friendship and esteem. According to the wise maxim, "Multum legere potius quam multa," I reviewed, again and again, the immortal works of the French and English, the Latin and Italian classics. My Greek studies (though less assiduous than I designed) maintained and extended my knowledge of that incomparable idiom. Homer and Xenophon were still my favorite authors; and I had almost prepared for the press an Essay on the Cyropœdia, which, in my own judgment, is not unhappily labored. After a certain age, the new publications of merit are the sole food of the many; and the most austere student will be often tempted to break the line, for the sake of indulging his own curiosity, and of providing the topics of fashionable currency. A more respectable motive may be assigned for the third perusal of Blackstone's Commentaries; and a copious and critical abstract of that English work was my first serious production in my native language. 3. My literary leisure was much less complete and independent than it might appear to the eye of a stranger. In the hurry of London I was destitute of books; in the solitude of Hampshire I was not master of my time. My quiet was gradually disturbed by our domestic anxiety; and I should be ashamed of my unfeeling philosophy, had I found much time or taste for study in the last fatal summer (1770) of my father's decay and dissolution.

The disembodying of the militia at the close of the war (1763) had restored the major (a new Cincinnatus) to a life of agriculture. His labors were useful, his pleasures innocent, his wishes moderate; and my

father *seemed* to enjoy the state of happiness which is celebrated by poets and philosophers as the most agreeable to nature and the least accessible to fortune.

> "Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis
> (Ut prisca gens mortalium)
> Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
> Solutus omni fœnore." *
>
> HOR. *Epod.* II.

But the last indispensable condition, the freedom from debt, was wanting to my father's felicity; and the vanities of his youth were severely punished by the solicitude and sorrow of his declining age. The first mortgage, on my return from Lausanne (1758), had afforded him a partial and transient relief. The annual demand of interest and allowance was a heavy deduction from his income; the militia was a source of expense; the farm in his hands was not a profitable adventure; he was loaded with the costs and damages of an obsolete lawsuit; and each year multiplied the number and exhausted the patience of his creditors. Under these painful circumstances, I consented to an additional mortgage, to the sale of Putney, and to every sacrifice that could alleviate his distress. But he was no longer capable of a rational effort, and his reluctant delays postponed not the evils themselves, but the remedies of those evils (*remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat*). The pangs of shame, tenderness, and self-reproach incessantly preyed on his vitals; his constitution was broken; he lost his strength and his sight: the rapid progress of a dropsy admonished him of his

* Like the first mortals blest is he,
From debts, and usury, and business free,
With his own team who ploughs the soil
Which grateful once confess'd his father's toil.
FRANCIS.

end, and he sunk into the grave on the 10th of November, 1770, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. A family tradition insinuates that Mr. William Law had drawn his pupil in the light and inconstant character of *Flatus*, who is ever confident, and ever disappointed in the chase of happiness. But these constitutional failings were happily compensated by the virtues of the head and heart, by the warmest sentiments of honor and humanity. His graceful person, polite address, gentle manners, and unaffected cheerfulness recommended him to the favor of every company; and in the change of times and opinions, his liberal spirit had long since delivered him from the zeal and prejudice of a Tory education. I submitted to the order of nature, and my grief was soothed by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety.

As soon as I had paid the last solemn duties to my father, and obtained, from time and reason, a tolerable composure of mind, I began to form a plan of an independent life, most adapted to my circumstances and inclination. Yet so intricate was the net, my efforts were so awkward and feeble, that nearly two years (November, 1770, to October, 1772) were suffered to elapse before I could disentangle myself from the management of the farm, and transfer my residence from Beriton to a house in London. During this interval I continued to divide my year between town and the country; but my new situation was brightened by hope, my stay in London was prolonged into the summer, and the uniformity of the summer was occasionally broken by visits and excursions at a distance from home. The gratification of my desires (they were not immoderate) has been seldom disappointed by the want of money or credit; my pride was never insulted by the visit of an

importunate tradesman; and my transient anxiety for the past or future has been dispelled by the studious or social occupation of the present hour. My conscience does not accuse me of any act of extravagance or injustice, and the remnant of my estate affords an ample and honorable provision for my declining age. I shall not expatiate on my economical affairs, which cannot be instructive or amusing to the reader. It is a rule of prudence, as well as of politeness, to reserve such confidence for the ear of a private friend, without exposing our situation to the envy or pity of strangers; for envy is productive of hatred, and pity borders too nearly on contempt. Yet I may believe, and even assert, that in circumstances more indigent or more wealthy I should never have accomplished the task or acquired the fame of an historian; that my spirit would have been broken by poverty and contempt, and that my industry might have been relaxed in the labor and luxury of a superfluous fortune.

I had now attained the first of earthly blessings, independence; I was the absolute master of my hours and actions; nor was I deceived in the hope that the establishment of my library in town would allow me to divide the day between study and society. Each year the circle of my acquaintance, the number of my dead and living companions, was enlarged. To a lover of books the shops and sales of London present irresistible temptations; and the manufacture of my history required a various and growing stock of materials. The militia, my travels, the House of Commons, the fame of an author, contributed to multiply my connections: I was chosen a member of the fashionable clubs; and, before I left England in 1783, there were few persons of any eminence in the literary or political world to whom I

was a stranger.* It would most assuredly be in my power to amuse the reader with a gallery of portraits and a collection of anecdotes. But I have always condemned the practice of transforming a private memorial into a vehicle of satire or praise. By my own choice I passed in town the greatest part of the year: but whenever I was desirous of breathing the air of the country, I possessed an hospitable retreat at Sheffield Place in Sussex, in the family of my valuable friend Mr. Holroyd, whose character, under the name of Lord Sheffield, has since been more conspicuous to the public.

No sooner was I settled in my house and library than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my History. At the outset all was dark and doubtful, — even the title of the work, the true era of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labor of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced

* From the mixed though polite company of Boodle's, White's, and Brooks's, I must honorably distinguish a weekly society which was instituted in the year 1764, and which still continues to flourish, under the title of the Literary Club (Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 415. Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides, p. 97). The names of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Colman, Sir William Jones, Dr. Percy, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Adam Smith, Mr. Steevens, Mr. Dunning, Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Warton, and his brother, Mr. Thomas Warton, Dr. Burney, etc., form a large and luminous constellation of British stars.

with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced, by three successive revisals, from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed without any loss of facts or sentiments. An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns, from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends, some will praise from politeness, and some will criticise from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event.

By the friendship of Mr. (now Lord) Elliot, who had married my first cousin, I was returned at the general election for the borough of Liskeard. I took my seat at the beginning of the memorable contest between Great Britain and America, and supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not perhaps the interest, of the mother country. After a fleeting illusive hope, prudence condemned me to acquiesce in the humble station of a mute. I was not armed by nature and education with the intrepid energy of mind and voice,

"Vincentum strepitus, et natum rebus agendis."

Timidity was fortified by pride, and even the success of my pen discouraged the trial of my voice.* But I

* A French sketch of Mr. Gibbon's Life, written by himself, probably for the use of some foreign journalist or translator, contains no fact not mentioned in his English Life. He there describes himself with his usual candor. "Depuis huit ans il a assisté aux déliberations le plus im-

assisted at the debates of a free assembly; I listened to the attack and defence of eloquence and reason; I had a near prospect of the character, views, and passions of the first men of the age. The cause of government was ably vindicated by Lord North, a statesman of spotless integrity, a consummate master of debate, who could wield with equal dexterity the arms of reason and of ridicule. He was seated on the treasury-bench between his attorney and solicitor-general, the two pillars of the law and state, *magis pares quam similes;* and the minister might indulge in a short slumber whilst he was upholden on either hand by the majestic sense of Thurlow and the skilful eloquence of Wedderburne. From the adverse side of the house an ardent and powerful opposition was supported by the lively declamation of Barré, the legal acuteness of Dunning, the profuse and philosophic fancy of Burke, and the argumentative vehemence of Fox, who in the conduct of a party approved himself equal to the conduct of an empire. By such men every operation of peace and war, every principle of justice or policy, every question of authority and freedom, was attacked and defended; and the subject of the momentous contest was the union or separation of Great Britain and America. The eight sessions that I sat in Parliament were a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian.

The volume of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first

portantes, mais il ne s'est jamais trouvé *le courage* ni *le talent* de parler dans une assemblée publique." This sketch was written before the publication of his three last volumes, as in closing it he says of his History: "Cette entreprise lui demande encore plusieurs années d'une application soutennée; mais quelqu'en soit le succès, il trouve dans cette application même un plaisir toujours varié et toujours renaissant." S.

session, was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsly, I agreed upon easy terms with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. During this awful interval I was neither elated by the ambition of fame nor depressed by the apprehension of contempt. My diligence and accuracy were attested by my own conscience. History is the most popular species of writing, since it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. I had chosen an illustrious subject. Rome is familiar to the school-boy and the statesman; and my narrative was deduced from the last period of classical reading. I had likewise flattered myself that an age of light and liberty would receive, without scandal, an inquiry into the human *causes* of the progress and establishment of Christianity.

I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the histo-

rian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any *profane* critic. The favor of mankind is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of the public and their favorite is productive of those warm sensibilities which at a second meeting can no longer be rekindled. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candor of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple. A letter from Mr. Hume overpaid the labor of ten years; but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians.

That curious and original letter will amuse the reader, and his gratitude should shield my free communication from the reproach of vanity.

EDINBURGH, March 18, 1776.

DEAR SIR, — As I ran through your volume of history with great avidity and impatience, I cannot forbear discovering somewhat of the same impatience in returning you thanks for your agreeable present, and expressing the satisfaction which the performance has given me. Whether I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I must regard the work as equally the object of esteem; and I own that if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance from an Englishman in our age would have given me some surprise. You may smile at this sentiment; but as it seems to me that your countrymen, for almost a whole generation, have given themselves up to barbarous and absurd faction, and have totally neglected all polite letters, I no longer expected any valuable production ever to come from them. I know it will give you pleasure (as it did me) to find that all the men of letters in this place concur in their admiration of your work, and in their anxious desire of your continuing it.

When I heard of your undertaking (which was some time ago) I own I was a little curious to see how you would extricate yourself from the subject of your two last chapters. I think you have observed a very prudent temperament; but it was impossible to treat the subject so as not to give grounds of suspicion against you, and you may expect that a clamor will arise. This, if anything, will retard your success with the public; for in every other respect your work is calculated to be popular. But among many other marks of decline, the prevalence of superstition in England prognosticates the fall of philosophy and decay of taste; and though nobody be more capable than you to revive them, you will probably find a struggle in your first advances.

I see you entertain a great doubt with regard to the authenticity of the poems of Ossian. You are certainly right in so doing. It is indeed strange that any men of sense could have imagined it possible that above twenty thousand verses, along with numberless historical facts, could have been preserved by oral tradition during fifty generations, by the rudest perhaps of all the European nations, the most necessitous, the most turbulent, and the most unsettled. Where a supposition is so contrary to common sense, any positive evidence of it ought never to be regarded. Men run with great avidity to give their evidence in favor of what flatters their passions and their national prejudices. You are therefore over and above indulgent to us in speaking of the matter with hesitation.

I must inform you that we are all very anxious to hear that you have fully collected the materials for your second volume, and that you are even considerably advanced in the composition of it. I speak this more in the name of my friends than in my own, as I cannot expect to live so long as to see the publication of it. Your ensuing volume will be more delicate than the preceding, but I trust in your prudence for extricating you from the difficulties; and, in all events, you have courage to despise the clamor of bigots.

I am, with great regard, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

DAVID HUME.

Some weeks afterwards I had the melancholy pleasure of seeing Mr. Hume in his passage through London; his body feeble, his mind firm. On the 25th of August of the same year (1776) he died at Edinburgh the death of a philosopher.

My second excursion to Paris was determined by the pressing invitation of M. and Madame Necker, who had visited England in the preceding summer. On my arrival I found M. Necker director-general of the finances, in the first bloom of power and popularity. His private fortune enabled him to support a liberal establishment; and his wife, whose talents and virtues I had long admired, was admirably qualified to preside in the conversation of her table and drawing-room. As their friend, I was introduced to the best company of both sexes, to the foreign ministers of all nations, and to the first names and characters of France, who distinguished me by such marks of civility and kindness as gratitude will not suffer me to forget, and modesty will not allow me to enumerate. The fashionable suppers often broke into the morning hours; yet I occasionally consulted the royal library, and that of the Abbey of St. Germain; and in the free use of their books at home I had always reason to praise the liberality of those institutions. The society of men of letters I neither courted nor declined; but I was happy in the acquaintance of M. de Buffon, who united with a sublime genius the most amiable simplicity of mind and manners. At the table of my old friend, M. de Forcemagne, I was involved in a dispute with the Abbé de Mably; and his jealous irascible spirit revenged itself on a work which he was incapable of reading in the original.

As I might be partial in my own cause, I shall

transcribe the words of an unknown critic, observing only that this dispute had been preceded by another on the English constitution, at the house of the Countess de Froulay, an old Jansenist lady.

"Vous étiez chez M. de Forcemagne, mon cher Théodon, le jour que M. l'Abbé de Mably et M. Gibbon y dinèrent en grande compagnie. La conversation roula presque entièrement sur l'histoire. L'abbé, étant un profond politique, la tourna sur l'administration, quand on fut au dessert; et comme par caractère, par humeur, par l'habitude d'admirer Tite Live, il ne prise que le systême républicain, il se mit à vanter l'excellence des républiques; bien persuadé que le savant Anglois l'approuveroit en tout, et admireroit la profondeur de génie qui avoit fait deviner tous ces avantages à un François. Mais M. Gibbon, instruit par l'expérience des inconvéniens d'un gouvernement populaire, ne fut point du tout de son avis, et il prit généreusement la défense du gouvernement monarchique. L'abbé voulut le convaincre par Tite Live, et par quelques argumens tirés de Plutarque en faveur des Spartiates. M. Gibbon, doué de la mémoire la plus heureuse, et ayant tous les faits présens à la pensée, domina bientôt la conversation; l'abbé se fâcha, il s'emporta, il dit des choses dures; l'Anglois, conservant le phlegme de son pays, prenoit ses avantages, et pressoit l'abbé avec d'autant plus de succès que la colère le troubloit de plus en plus. La conversation s'échauffoit, et M. de Forcemagne la rompit en se levant de table, et en passant dans le salon, où personne ne fut tenté de la renouer." *

* Supplément de la Manière d'écrire l'Histoire, p. 125.

Of the voluminous writings of the Abbé de Mably (see his Éloge by the Abbé Brizard), the "Principes du droit public de l'Europe," and the first part of the "Observations sur l'Histoire de France," may be deservedly praised; and even the "Manière d'écrire l'Histoire" contains several useful precepts and judicious remarks. Mably was a lover of virtue and freedom; but his virtue was austere, and his freedom was impatient of an equal. Kings, magistrates, nobles, and successful writers were the objects of his contempt or hatred or envy; but his illiberal abuse of

Nearly two years had elapsed between the publication of my first and the commencement of my second volume; and the causes must be assigned of this long delay. 1. After a short holiday, I indulged my curiosity in some studies of a very different nature; a course of anatomy, which was demonstrated by Dr. Hunter, and some lessons of chemistry, which were delivered by Mr. Higgins. The principles of these sciences, and a taste for books of natural history, contributed to multiply my ideas and images; and the anatomist and chemist may sometimes track me in their own snow. 2. I dived, perhaps too deeply, into the mud of the Arian controversy; and many days of reading, thinking and writing were consumed in the pursuit of a phantom. 3. It is difficult to arrange, with order and perspicuity, the various transactions of the age of Constantine; and so much was I displeased with the first essay that I committed to the flames above fifty sheets. 4. The six months of Paris and pleasure must be deducted from the account. But when I resumed my task I felt my improvement; I was now master of my style and subject, and while the measure of my daily performance was enlarged, I discovered less reason to cancel or correct. It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had

Voltaire, Hume, Buffon, the Abbè Reynal, Dr. Robertson, and *tutti quanti*, can be injurious only to himself.

"Est il rien de plus fastidieux [says the polite censor] qu'un M. Gibbon, qui dans son éternelle Histoire des Empereurs Romains, suspend à chaque instant son insipide et lente narration, pour vous expliquer la cause des faits que vous allez lire?" (Manière d'écrire l'Histoire, p. 184. See another passage, p. 280.) Yet I am indebted to the Abbé de Mably for two such advocates as the anonymous French critic and my friend Mr. Hayley. (Hayley's works, 8vo Edit. Vol. II. pp. 261–263.)

given the last polish to my work. Shall I add that I never found my mind more vigorous, nor my composition more happy, than in the winter hurry of society and parliament?

Had I believed that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow of Christianity; had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent would feel, or affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility, I might perhaps have softened the two invidious chapters which would create many enemies and conciliate few friends. But the shaft was shot, the alarm was sounded, and I could only rejoice that if the voice of our priests was clamorous and bitter, their hands were disarmed from the powers of persecution. I adhered to the wise resolution of trusting myself and my writings to the candor of the public, till Mr. Davies of Oxford presumed to attack, not the faith, but the fidelity of the historian. My Vindication, expressive of less anger than contempt, amused for a moment the busy and idle metropolis; and the most rational part of the laity, and even of the clergy, appear to have been satisfied of my innocence and accuracy. I would not print this Vindication in quarto, lest it should be bound and preserved with the History itself. At the distance of twelve years I calmly affirm my judgment of Davies, Chelsum, etc. A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They, however, were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was indeed neglected; and I dare not boast the making Dr. Watson a bishop; he is a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit: but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davies, and of collating Dr. Apthorpe to an archiepiscopal living. Their success encouraged the zeal of

Taylor the Arian,* and Milner the Methodist,† with many others whom it would be difficult to remember and tedious to rehearse. The list of my adversaries, however, was graced with the more respectable names of Dr. Priestley, Sir David Dalrymple, and Dr. White; and every polemic, of either university, discharged his sermon or pamphlet against the impenetrable silence of the Roman historian. In his "History of the Corruptions of Christianity," Dr. Priestley threw down his two gauntlets to Bishop Hurd and Mr. Gibbon. I declined the challenge in a letter, exhorting my opponent to enlighten the world by his philosophical discoveries, and to remember that the merit of his predecessor Servetus is now reduced to a single passage which indicates the smaller circulation of the blood through the lungs, from and to the heart.‡ Instead of listening to this friendly advice, the dauntless philosopher of Birmingham continued to fire away his double battery against those who believed too little and those who believed too much. From *my* replies he has nothing to hope or fear; but his Socinian shield has repeatedly been pierced by the mighty spear of Horsley, and his trumpet of sedition may at length awaken the magistrates of a free country.

* The stupendous title, "Thoughts on the Causes of the Grand Apostasy," at first agitated my nerves, till I discovered that it was the apostasy of the whole Church, since the Council of Nice, from Mr. Taylor's private religion. His book is a thorough mixture of *high* enthusiasm and *low* buffoonery, and the Millennium is a fundamental article of his creed.

† From his grammar school, at Kingston-upon-Hull, Mr. Joseph Milner pronounces an anathema against all rational religion. *His* faith is a divine taste, a spiritual inspiration; *his* church is a mystic and invisible body; the *natural* Christians, such as Mr. Locke, who believe and interpret the Scriptures, are, in his judgment, no better than profane infidels.

‡ Astruc de la Structure du Cœur, Tom. I. 77, 79.

The profession and rank of Sir David Dalrymple (now a lord of session) have given a more decent color to his style. But he scrutinized each separate passage of the two chapters with the dry minuteness of a special pleader; and as he was always solicitous to make, he may have succeeded sometimes in finding, a flaw. In his "Annals of Scotland" he has shown himself a diligent collector and an accurate critic.

I have praised, and I still praise, the eloquent sermons which were preached in St. Mary's pulpit at Oxford by Dr. White. If he assaulted me with some degree of illiberal acrimony, in such a place and before such an audience, he was obliged to speak the language of the country. I smiled at a passage in one of his private letters to Mr. Badcock, — "The part where we encounter Gibbon must be brilliant and striking."

In a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge Dr. Edwards complimented a work "which can only perish with the language itself"; and esteems the author a formidable enemy. He is, indeed, astonished that more learning and ingenuity have not been shown in the defence of Israel; that the prelates and dignitaries of the Church (alas, good man!) did not vie with each other, whose stone should sink the deepest in the forehead of this Goliath.

"But the force of truth will oblige us to confess that, in the attacks which have been levelled against our sceptical historian, we can discover but slender traces of profound and exquisite erudition, of solid criticism and accurate investigation; but we are too frequently disgusted by vague and inconclusive reasonings, by unseasonable banter and senseless witticisms, by imbittered bigotry and enthusiastic jargon, by futile cavils and

illiberal invectives. Proud and elated by the weakness of his antagonists, he condescends not to handle the sword of controversy." *

Let me frankly own that I was startled at the first discharge of ecclesiastical ordnance; but as soon as I found that this empty noise was mischievous only in the intention, my fear was converted into indignation; and every feeling of indignation or curiosity has long since subsided in pure and placid indifference.

The prosecution of my History was soon afterwards checked by another controversy of a very different kind. At the request of the Lord Chancellor, and of Lord Weymouth, then Secretary of State, I vindicated, against the French manifesto, the justice of the British arms. The whole correspondence of Lord Stormont, our late ambassador at Paris, was submitted to my inspection; and the "Mémoire Justificatif," which I composed in French, was first approved by the cabinet ministers and then delivered as a state paper to the courts of Europe. The style and manner are praised by Beaumarchais himself, who, in his private quarrel, attempted a reply; but he flatters me by ascribing the memoir to Lord Stormont; and the grossness of his invective betrays the loss of temper and of wit; he acknowledged † that "le style ne seroit pas sans grace, ni la logique sans justice," etc., if the facts were true, which he undertakes to disprove. For these facts my credit is not pledged; I spoke as a lawyer from my brief; but the veracity of Beaumarchais may be estimated from the assertion that France, by the treaty of Paris (1763), was limited to a certain number of ships of war. On the application of the

* Monthly Review, October, 1790.

† Œuvres de Beaumarchais, Tom. III. pp. 299, 355.

Duke of Choiseul, he was obliged to retract this daring falsehood.

Among the honorable connections which I had formed, I may justly be proud of the friendship of Mr. Wedderburne, at that time attorney-general, who now illustrates the title of Lord Loughborough, and the office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. By his strong recommendation, and the favorable disposition of Lord North, I was appointed one of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations; and my private income was enlarged by a clear addition of between seven and eight hundred pounds a year. The fancy of an hostile orator may paint, in the strong colors of ridicule, "the perpetual virtual adjournment and the unbroken sitting vacation of the Board of Trade." * But it must be allowed that our duty was not intolerably severe, and that I enjoyed many days and weeks of repose without being called away from my library to the office. My acceptance of a place provoked some of the leaders of opposition with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy; † and I was most

* I can never forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator, Mr. Burke, was heard by all sides of the house, and even by those whose existence he proscribed. (See Mr. Burke's speech on the Bill of Reform, pp. 72–80.) The Lords of Trade blushed at their insignificancy, and Mr. Eden's appeal to the two thousand five hundred volumes of our reports served only to excite a general laugh. I take this opportunity of certifying the correctness of Mr. Burke's printed speeches, which I have heard and read.

† It has always appeared to me that nothing could be more unjustifiable than the manner in which some persons allowed themselves to speak of Mr. Gibbon's acceptance of an office at the Board of Trade. I can conceive that he may carelessly have used strong expressions in respect to some or all parties; but he never meant that such expressions should be taken literally; and I know, beyond all possibility of question, that he was so far from being "in a state of savage hostility towards Lord North," as it is savagely expressed by Mr. Whitaker, that he always loved and esteemed him. I saw Mr. Gibbon constantly at this time, and was well

unjustly accused of deserting a party in which I had never enlisted.

The aspect of the next session of Parliament was stormy and perilous; county meetings, petitions, and committees of correspondence, announced the public discontent; and instead of voting with a triumphant majority, the friends of government were often exposed to a struggle and sometimes to a defeat. The House of Commons adopted Mr. Dunning's motion, "That the influence of the crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished": and Mr. Burke's Bill of Reform was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Our late president, the American secretary of state, very narrowly escaped the sentence of proscription; but the unfortunate Board of Trade was abolished in the committee by a small majority (207 to 199) of eight votes. The storm, however, blew over for a time; a large defection of country gentlemen eluded the sanguine hopes of the patriots: the Lords of Trade were revived; administration recovered their strength and spirit; and the flames of London, which were kindled by a mischievous madman,* admonished all thinking men of the danger of an appeal to the people.

acquainted with all his political opinions. And although he was not perfectly satisfied with *every* measure, yet he uniformly supported all the *principal ones* regarding the American war; and considered himself, and indeed was, a friend to administration to the very period of his accepting office. He liked the brilliant society of a club, the most distinguished members of which were notorious for their opposition to government, and might be led, in some degree, to join in their language; but Mr. Gibbon had little, I had almost said no, political acrimony in his character. If the opposition of that or any other time could claim for their own every person who was not perfectly satisfied with all the measures of government, their party would unquestionably have been more formidable. S.

* The Gordon Riots, celebrated in Barnaby Rudge.

In the premature dissolution which followed this session of Parliament I lost my seat. Mr. Elliot was now deeply engaged in the measures of opposition, and the electors of Liskeard * are commonly of the same opinion as Mr. Elliot.

In this interval of my senatorial life I published the second and third volumes of the Decline and Fall. My ecclesiastical history still breathed the same spirit of freedom; but Protestant zeal is more indifferent to the characters and controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. My obstinate silence had damped the ardor of the polemics. Dr. Watson, the most candid of my adversaries, assured me that he had no thoughts of renewing the attack; and my impartial balance of the virtues and vices of Julian was generally praised. This truce was interrupted only by some animadversions of the Catholics of Italy, and by some angry letters from Mr. Travis, who made me personally responsible for condemning, with the best critics, the spurious text of the three heavenly witnesses.

The piety or prudence of my Italian translator has provided an antidote against the poison of his original. The fifth and seventh volumes are armed with five letters from an anonymous divine to his friends, Foothead and Kirk, two English students at Rome; and this meritorious service is commended by Monsignor Stonor, a prelate of the same nation, who discovers much venom in the *fluid* and nervous style of Gibbon. The critical essay at the end of the third volume was furnished by the Abbate Nicola Spedalieri, whose zeal has gradually swelled to a more solid confutation in two quarto volumes. Shall I be excused for not having read them?

* The borough which Mr. Gibbon had represented in Parliament.

The brutal insolence of Mr. Travis's challenge can only be excused by the absence of learning, judgment, and humanity; and to that excuse he has the fairest or foulest pretension. Compared with Archdeacon Travis, Chelsum and Davies assume the title of respectable enemies.

The bigoted advocate of popes and monks may be turned over even to the bigots of Oxford; and the wretched Travis still smarts under the lash of the merciless Porson. I consider Mr. Porson's answer to Archdeacon Travis as the most acute and accurate piece of criticism which has appeared since the days of Bentley. His strictures are founded in argument, enriched with learning, and enlivened with wit; and his adversary neither deserves nor finds any quarter at his hands. The evidence of the three heavenly witnesses would now be rejected in any court of justice: but prejudice is blind, authority is deaf, and our vulgar bibles will ever be polluted by this spurious text, "Sedet æternumque sedebit." The more learned ecclesiastics will indeed have the secret satisfaction of reprobating in the closet what they read in the church.

I perceived, and without surprise, the coldness and even prejudice of the town; nor could a whisper escape my ear, that, in the judgment of many readers, my continuation was much inferior to the original attempts. An author who cannot ascend will always appear to sink: envy was now prepared for my reception; and the zeal of my religious was fortified by the malice of my political enemies. Bishop Newton, in writing his own life, was at full liberty to declare how much he himself and two eminent brethren were disgusted by Mr. Gibbon's prolixity, tediousness, and

affectation. But the old man should not have indulged his zeal in a false and feeble charge against the historian who had faithfully and even cautiously rendered Dr. Burnet's meaning by the alternative of sleep or repose. That philosophic divine supposes that in the period between death and the resurrection human souls exist without a body, endowed with internal consciousness, but destitute of all active or passive connection with the external world. "Secundum communem dictionem sacræ scripturæ, mors dicitur somnus, et morientes dicuntur *obdormire*, quod innuere mihi videtur statum mortis esse statum quietis, silentii, et αεργασεας." *

I was, however, encouraged by some domestic and foreign testimonies of applause; and the second and third volumes insensibly rose in sale and reputation to a level with the first. But the public is seldom wrong; and I am inclined to believe that, especially in the beginning, they are more prolix and less entertaining than the first: my efforts had not been relaxed by success, and I had rather deviated into the opposite fault of minute and superfluous diligence. On the Continent my name and writings were slowly diffused: a French translation of the first volume had disappointed the booksellers of Paris; and a passage in the third was construed as a personal reflection on the reigning monarch.†

* De Statû Mortuorum, Ch. V. p. 98.

† It may not be generally known that Louis XVI. is a great reader, and a reader of English books. On perusing a passage of my History, which seems to compare him to Arcadius or Honorius, he expressed his resentment to the Prince of B——, from whom the intelligence was conveyed to me. I shall neither disclaim the allusion, nor examine the likeness; but the situation of the late King of France excludes all suspicion of flattery; and I am ready to declare that the concluding observations of my third volume were written before his accession to the throne.

Before I could apply for a seat at the general election, the list was already full; but Lord North's promise was sincere, his recommendation was effectual, and I was soon chosen on a vacancy for the borough of Lymington in Hampshire. In the first session of the new Parliament administration stood their ground; their final overthrow was reserved for the second. The American war had once been the favorite of the country: the pride of England was irritated by the resistance of her colonies, and the executive power was driven by national clamor into the most vigorous and coercive measures. But the length of a fruitless contest, the loss of armies, the accumulation of debt and taxes, and the hostile confederacy of France, Spain, and Holland, indisposed the public to the American war, and the persons by whom it was conducted; the representatives of the people followed, at a slow distance, the changes of their opinion; and the ministers, who refused to bend, were broken by the tempest. As soon as Lord North had lost, or was about to lose, a majority in the House of Commons, he surrendered his office, and retired to a private station, with the tranquil assurance of a clear conscience and a cheerful temper: the old fabric was dissolved, and the posts of government were occupied by the victorious and veteran troops of opposition. The Lords of Trade were not immediately dismissed, but the board itself was abolished by Mr. Burke's bill, which decency had compelled the patriots to revive; and I was stripped of a convenient salary, after having enjoyed it about three years

So flexible is the title of my History, that the final era might be fixed at my own choice; and I long hesitated whether I should be content with the three

volumes, the Fall of the Western Empire, which fulfilled my first engagement with the public. In this interval of suspense, nearly a twelvemonth, I returned by a natural impulse to the Greek authors of antiquity; I read with new pleasure the Iliad and the Odyssey, the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, a large portion of the tragic and comic theatre of Athens, and many interesting dialogues of the Socratic school. Yet in the luxury of freedom I began to wish for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book and an object to every inquiry: the preface of a new edition announced my design, and I dropped without reluctance from the age of Plato to that of Justinian. The original texts of Procopius and Agathias supplied the events and even the characters of his reign; but a laborious winter was devoted to the codes, the pandects, and the modern interpreters, before I presumed to form an abstract of the civil law. My skill was improved by practice, my diligence perhaps was quickened by the loss of office; and, excepting the last chapter, I had finished the fourth volume before I sought a retreat on the banks of the Leman lake.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to expatiate on the public or secret history of the times, — the schism which followed the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the appointment of the Earl of Shelburne, the resignation of Mr. Fox, and his famous coalition with Lord North. But I may assert, with some degree of assurance, that in their political conflict those great antagonists had never felt any personal animosity to each other, that their reconciliation was easy and sincere, and that their friendship has never been clouded by the shadow of suspicion or

jealousy. The most violent or venal of their respective followers embraced this fair occasion of revolt, but their alliance still commanded a majority in the House of Commons; the peace was censured, Lord Shelburne resigned, and the two friends knelt on the same cushion to take the oath of secretary of state. From a principle of gratitude I adhered to the coalition: my vote was counted in the day of battle, but I was overlooked in the division of the spoil. There were many claimants more deserving and importunate than myself: the Board of Trade could not be restored; and, while the list of places was curtailed, the number of candidates was doubled. An easy dismission to a secure seat at the Board of Customs or Excise was promised on the first vacancy: but the chance was distant and doubtful; nor could I solicit with much ardor an ignoble servitude, which would have robbed me of the most valuable of my studious hours:* at the same time the tumult of London, and the attendance on Parliament, were grown more irksome; and without some additional income I could not long or prudently maintain the style of expense to which I was accustomed.

* About the same time, it being in contemplation to send a secretary of embassy to Paris, Mr. Gibbon was a competitor for that office. (See letter to and from Lord Thurlow.) The credit of being distinguished and stopped by government when he was leaving England, the salary of £1200 a year, the society of Paris, and the hope of a future provision for life, disposed him to renounce, though with much reluctance, an agreeable scheme on the point of execution; to engage, without experience, in a scene of business which he never liked; to give himself a master, or at least a principal, of an unknown, perhaps an unamiable character: to which might be added the danger of the recall of the ambassador or the change of ministry. Mr. Anthony Storer was preferred. Mr. Gibbon was somewhat indignant at the preference; but he never knew that it was the act of his friend Mr. Fox, contrary to the solicitations of Mr. Craufurd and other of his friends. S.

From my early acquaintance with Lausanne, I had always cherished a secret wish that the school of my youth might become the retreat of my declining age. A moderate fortune would secure the blessings of ease, leisure, and independence; the country, the people, the manners, the language, were congenial to my taste; and I might indulge the hope of passing some years in the domestic society of a friend. After travelling with several English, Mr. Deyverdun was now settled at home, in a pleasant habitation, the gift of his deceased aunt; we had long been separated, we had long been silent; yet in my first letter I exposed, with the most perfect confidence, my situation, my sentiments, and my designs. His immediate answer was a warm and joyful acceptance: the picture of our future life provoked my impatience; and the terms of arrangement were short and simple, as he possessed the property, and I undertook the expense of our common house. Before I could break my English chain, it was incumbent on me to struggle with the feelings of my heart, the indolence of my temper, and the opinion of the world, which unanimously condemned this voluntary banishment. In the disposal of my effects, the library, a sacred deposit, was alone excepted. As my post-chaise moved over Westminster Bridge, I bade a long farewell to the "fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ." My journey by the direct road through France was not attended with any accident, and I arrived at Lausanne nearly twenty years after my second departure. Within less than three months the coalition struck on some hidden rocks; had I remained on board I should have perished in the general shipwreck.

Since my establishment at Lausanne more than seven years have elapsed; and if every day has not

been equally soft and serene, not a day, not a moment, has occurred in which I have repented of my choice. During my absence, a long portion of human life, many changes had happened: my elder acquaintance had left the stage; virgins were ripened into matrons, and children were grown to the age of manhood. But the same manners were transmitted from one generation to another; my friend alone was an inestimable treasure; my name was not totally forgotten, and all were ambitious to welcome the arrival of a stranger and the return of a fellow-citizen. The first winter was given to a general embrace, without any nice discrimination of persons and characters. After a more regular settlement, a more accurate survey, I discovered three solid and permanent benefits of my new situation. 1. My personal freedom had been somewhat impaired by the House of Commons and the Board of Trade; but I was now delivered from the chain of duty and dependence, from the hopes and fears of political adventure; my sober mind was no longer intoxicated by the fumes of party, and I rejoiced in my escape, as often as I read of the midnight debates which preceded the dissolution of Parliament. 2. My English economy had been that of a solitary bachelor who might afford some occasional dinners. In Switzerland I enjoyed at every meal, at every hour, the free and pleasant conversation of the friend of my youth; and my daily table was always provided for the reception of one or two extraordinary guests. Our importance in society is less a positive than a relative weight: in London I was lost in the crowd; I ranked with the first families of Lausanne, and my style of prudent expense enabled me to maintain a fair balance of reciprocal civilities. 3. Instead of a small house between a street and a stable-yard, I began to

occupy a spacious and convenient mansion, connected on the north side with the city, and open on the south to a beautiful and boundless horizon. A garden of four acres had been laid out by the taste of Mr. Deyverdun; from the garden a rich scenery of meadows and vineyards descends to the Leman lake, and the prospect far beyond the lake is crowned by the stupendous mountains of Savoy. My books and my acquaintance had been first united in London; but this happy position of my library in town and country was finally reserved for Lausanne. Possessed of every comfort in this triple alliance, I could not be tempted to change my habitation with the changes of the seasons.

My friends had been kindly apprehensive that I should not be able to exist in a Swiss town at the foot of the Alps, after having so long conversed with the first men of the first cities of the world. Such lofty connections may attract the curious and gratify the vain; but I am too modest, or too proud, to rate my own value by that of my associates; and whatsoever may be the fame of learning or genius, experience has shown me that the cheaper qualifications of politeness and good sense are of more useful currency in the commerce of life. By many conversation is esteemed as a theatre or a school: but after the morning has been occupied by the labors of the library, I wish to unbend rather than to exercise my mind; and in the interval between tea and supper I am far from disdaining the innocent amusement of a game at cards. Lausanne is peopled by a numerous gentry, whose companionable idleness is seldom disturbed by the pursuits of avarice or ambition; the women, though confined to a domestic education, are endowed for the most part with more

taste and knowledge than their husbands and brothers; but the decent freedom of both sexes is equally remote from the extremes of simplicity and refinement. I shall add, as a misfortune rather than a merit, that the situation and beauty of the Pays de Vaud, the long habits of the English, the medical reputation of Dr. Tissot, and the fashion of viewing the mountains and glaciers, have opened us on all sides to the incursions of foreigners. The visits of M. and Madame Necker, of Prince Henry of Prussia, and of Mr. Fox, may form some pleasing exceptions; but, in general, Lausanne has appeared most agreeable in my eyes when we have been abandoned to our own society. I had frequently seen M. Necker, in the summer of 1784, at a country-house near Lausanne, where he composed his "Treatise on the Administration of the Finances." I have since, in October, 1790, visited him in his present residence, the castle and barony of Copet, near Geneva. Of the merits and measures of that statesman various opinions may be entertained; but all impartial men must agree in their esteem of his integrity and patriotism.

In the month of August, 1784, Prince Henry of Prussia, in his way to Paris, passed three days at Lausanne. His military conduct has been praised by professional men; his character has been vilified by the wit and malice of a demon;* but I was flattered by his affability, and entertained by his conversation.

In his tour to Switzerland (September, 1788) Mr. Fox gave me two days of free and private society. He seemed to feel, and even to envy, the happiness of my situation; while I admired the powers of a

* Mémoire Secret de la Cour de Berlin, par Mirabeau.

superior man, as they are blended in his attractive character with the softness and simplicity of a child. Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempt from the taint of malevolence, vanity, or falsehood.

My transmigration from London to Lausanne could not be effected without interrupting the course of my historical labors. The hurry of my departure, the joy of my arrival, the delay of my tools, suspended their progress; and a full twelvemonth was lost before I could resume the thread of regular and daily industry. A number of books most requisite and least common had been previously selected; the academical library of Lausanne, which I could use as my own, contained at least the fathers and councils; and I have derived some occasional succor from the public collections of Berne and Geneva. The fourth volume was soon terminated by an abstract of the controversies of the Incarnation, which the learned Dr. Prideaux was apprehensive of exposing to profane eyes. It had been the original design of the learned Dean Prideaux to write the history of the ruin of the Eastern church. In this work it would have been necessary, not only to unravel all those controversies which the Christians made about the hypostatical union, but also to unfold all the niceties and subtle notions which each sect entertained concerning it. The pious historian was apprehensive of exposing that incomprehensible mystery to the cavils and objections of unbelievers; and he durst not, "seeing the nature of this book, venture it abroad in so wanton and lewd an age." *

In the fifth and sixth volumes the revolutions of the

* See Preface to the Life of Mahomet, pp. 10, 11.

Empire and the world are most rapid, various, and instructive; and the Greek or Roman historians are checked by the hostile narratives of the barbarians of the East and the West.*

It was not till after many designs, and many trials, that I preferred, as I still prefer, the method of grouping my picture by nations; and the seeming neglect of chronological order is surely compensated by the superior merits of interest and perspicuity. The style of the first volume is, in my opinion, somewhat crude and elaborate; in the second and third it is ripened into ease, correctness, and numbers; but in the three last I may have been seduced by the facility of my pen, and the constant habit of speaking one language and writing another may have infused some mixture of Gallic idioms. Happily for my eyes, I have always closed my studies with the day, and commonly with the morning; and a long but temperate labor has been accomplished without fatiguing either the mind or body; but when I computed the remainder of my time and my task, it was apparent that, according to the season of publication, the delay of a month would be productive of that of a year. I was now straining for the goal, and in the last winter many evenings were borrowed from the social pleasures of Lausanne. I could now wish that a pause, an interval, had been allowed for a serious revisal.

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th

* I have followed the judicious precept of the Abbé de Mably (Manière d'écrire l'Histoire, p. 110), who advises the historian not to dwell too minutely on the decay of the Eastern Empire, but to consider the barbarian conquerors as a more worthy subject of his narrative. "Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

I will add two facts which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.

I cannot help recollecting a much more extraordinary fact, which is affirmed of himself by Retif de la Bretorme, a voluminous and original writer of French novels. He labored, and may still labor, in the humble office of corrector to a printing-house; but this office enabled him to transport an entire volume from his mind to the press; and his work was given to the public without ever having been written by the pen.

After a quiet residence of four years, during which I had never moved ten miles from Lausanne, it was not

without some reluctance and terror that I undertook, in a journey of two hundred leagues, to cross the mountains and the sea. Yet this formidable adventure was achieved without danger or fatigue; and at the end of a fortnight I found myself in Lord Sheffield's house and library, safe, happy, and at home.

During the whole time of my residence in England I was entertained at Sheffield Place and in Downing Street by his hospitable kindness; and the most pleasant period was that which I passed in the domestic society of the family. In the larger circle of the metropolis I observed the country and the inhabitants with the knowledge, and without the prejudices, of an Englishman; but I rejoiced in the apparent increase of wealth and prosperity, which might be fairly divided between the spirit of the nation and the wisdom of the minister. All party-resentment was now lost in oblivion; since I was no man's rival, no man was my enemy. I felt the dignity of independence; and as I asked no more, I was satisfied with the general civilities of the world. The house in London which I frequented with most pleasure and assiduity was that of Lord North. After the loss of power and of sight, he was still happy in himself and his friends; and my public tribute of gratitude and esteem could no longer be suspected of any interested motive. Before my departure from England, I was present at the august spectacle of Mr. Hastings's trial in Westminster hall. It is not my province to absolve or condemn the governor of India;* but Mr. Sheridan's eloquence commanded my applause; nor could I hear without emotion the personal compli-

* He considered the *persecution* of that highly respectable person to have arisen from party views. S.

ment which he paid me in the presence of the British nation.*

As the publication of my three last volumes was the principal object, so it was the first care of my English journey. The previous arrangements with the bookseller and the printer were settled in my passage through London, and the proofs, which I returned more correct, were transmitted every post from the press to Sheffield Place. The length of the operation and the leisure of the country allowed some time to review my manuscript. Several rare and useful books, the Assises de Jerusalem, Ramusius de Bello C. P^aro, the Greek Acts of the Synod of Florence, the Statuta Urbis Romæ, etc., were procured, and I introduced in their proper places the supplements which they afforded. The impression of the fourth volume had consumed three months. Our common interest required that we should move with a quicker pace; and Mr. Strahan fulfilled his engagement, which few printers could sustain, of delivering every week three thousand copies of nine sheets. The day of publication was, however, delayed, that it might coincide with the fifty-first anniversary of my own birthday; the double festival was celebrated by a cheerful literary dinner at Mr. Cadell's house; and I seemed to blush while they read an elegant compliment from Mr. Hayley, whose poetical talents had more than once been employed in the praise of his friend. Before Mr. Hayley inscribed with my name his epistles on history, I was not acquainted with that amiable man and elegant poet. He afterwards thanked me in verse for my second and

* He said the facts that made up the volume of narrative were unparalleled in atrociousness; and that nothing equal in criminality was to be traced either in ancient or modern history, in the correct periods of Tacitus, or the luminous page of Gibbon. *Morning Chronicle*, June 14, 1788.

third volumes; and in the summer of 1781 the Roman Eagle* (a proud title) accepted the invitation of the English Sparrow who chirped in the groves of Eartham, near Chichester. As most of the former purchasers were naturally desirous of completing their sets, the sale of the quarto edition was quick and easy; and an

* A CARD OF INVITATION TO MR. GIBBON,

AT BRIGHTHELMSTONE, 1781.

An English sparrow, pert and free,
Who chirps beneath his native tree,
Hearing the Roman eagle 's near,
And feeling more respect than fear,
Thus, with united love and awe,
Invites him to his shed of straw.
Tho' he is but a twittering sparrow,
The field he hops in rather narrow,
When nobler plumes attract his view
He ever pays them homage due;
He looks with reverential wonder
On him whose talons bear the thunder.
Nor could the jackdaws e'er inveigle
His voice to vilify the eagle;
Tho' issuing from the holy towers
In which they build their warmest bowers,
Their sovereign's haunt they slyly search,
In hopes to catch him on his perch
(For Pindar says, beside his God
The thunder-bearing bird will nod);
Then peeping round his still retreat,
They pick from underneath his feet
Some molted feather he lets fall,
And swear he cannot fly at all.
Lord of the sky! whose pounce can tear
These croakers that infest the air,
Trust him, the sparrow loves to sing
The praise of thy imperial wing!
He thinks thou 'lt deem him, on his word,
An honest though familiar bird;
And hopes thou soon wilt condescend
To look upon thy little friend;
That he may boast around his grove
A visit from the bird of Jove.

octavo size was printed, to satisfy at a cheaper rate the public demand. The conclusion of my work was generally read, and variously judged. The style has been exposed to much academical criticism; a religious clamor was revived; and the reproach of indecency has been loudly echoed by the rigid censors of morals. I never could understand the clamor that has been raised against the indecency of my three last volumes. 1. An equal degree of freedom in the former part, especially in the first volume, had passed without reproach. 2. I am justified in painting the manners of the times; the vices of Theodora form an essential feature in the reign and character of Justinian; and the most naked tale in my history is told by the Rev. Mr. Joseph Warton, an instructor of youth (Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, pp. 322–324). My English text is chaste, and all licentious passages are left in the obscurity of a learned language. "Le Latin dans ses mots brave l'honnêteté," says the correct Boileau, in a country and idiom more scrupulous than our own. Yet, upon the whole, the History of the Decline and Fall seems to have struck root both at home and abroad, and may perhaps a hundred years hence still continue to be abused. I am less flattered by Mr. Porson's high encomium on the style and spirit of my History, than I am satisfied with his honorable testimony to my attention, diligence, and accuracy; those humble virtues, which religious zeal had most audaciously denied. The sweetness of his praise is tempered by a reasonable mixture of acid. As the book may not be common in England, I shall transcribe my own character from the "Bibliotheca Historica" of Meuselius,* a learned and laborious German.

* Vol. IV. Part I. pp. 342, 344.

"Summis ævi nostri historicis Gibbons sine dubio adnume randus est. Inter capitolii ruinas stans, primum hujus operis scribendi consilium cepit. Florentissimos vitæ annos colligendo et laborando eidem impendit. Enatum inde monumentum ære perennius, licet passim appareant sinistrè dicta, minus perfecta, veritati non satis consentanea. Videmus quidem ubique fere studium scrutandi veritatemque scribendi maximum: tamen sine Tillemontio duce ubi scilicet hujus historia finitur sæpius noster titubat atque hallucinatur. Quod vel maxime fit, ubi de rebus ecclesiasticis vel de jurisprudentiâ Romanâ (Tom. IV.) tradit, et in aliis locis. Attamen nævi hujus generis haud impediunt quo minus operis summan et οικονομιαν præclarè dispositam, delectum rerum sapientissimum, argutum quoque interdum, dictionemque seu stylum historico æque ac philosopho dignissimum, et vix à quoque alio Anglo, Humio ac Robertsono haud exceptis (*præreptum?*), vehementer laudemus, atque sæculo nostro de hujusmodi historiâ gratulemur. . . . . Gibbonus adversarios cum in tum extra patriam nactus est, quia propagationem religionis Christianæ, non, ut vulgo fieri solet, aut more theologorum, sed ut historicum et philosophum decet, exposuerat."

The French, Italian, and German translations have been executed with various success; but, instead of patronizing, I should willingly suppress such imperfect copies, which injure the character, while they propagate the name of the author. The first volume had been feebly, though faithfully, translated into French by M. Le Clerc de Septchenes, a young gentleman of a studious character and liberal fortune. After his decease the work was continued by two manufacturers of Paris, MM. Desmuniers and Cant-

well; but the former is now an active member of the National Assembly, and the undertaking languishes in the hands of his associate. The superior merit of the interpreter, or his language, inclines me to prefer the Italian version: but I wish it were in my power to read the German, which is praised by the best judges. The Irish pirates are at once my friends and my enemies. But I cannot be displeased with the two numerous and correct impressions which have been published for the use of the Continent at Basil in Switzerland. The conquests of our language and literature are not confined to Europe alone, and a writer who succeeds in London is speedily read on the banks of the Delaware and the Ganges.

In the preface of the fourth volume, while I gloried in the name of an Englishman, I announced my approaching return to the neighborhood of the lake of Lausanne. This last trial confirmed my assurance that I had wisely chosen for my own happiness; nor did I once, in a year's visit, entertain a wish of settling in my native country. Britain is the free and fortunate island; but where is the spot in which I could unite the comforts and beauties of my establishment at Lausanne? The tumult of London astonished my eyes and ears; the amusements of public places were no longer adequate to the trouble; the clubs and assemblies were filled with new faces and young men; and our best society, our long and late dinners, would soon have been prejudicial to my health. Without any share in the political wheel, I must be idle and insignificant; yet the most splendid temptations would not have enticed me to engage a second time in the servitude of Parliament or office. At Tunbridge, some weeks after the publication of

my History, I reluctantly quitted Lord and Lady Sheffield; and with a young Swiss friend, whom I had introduced to the English world, I pursued the road of Dover and Lausanne. My habitation was embellished in my absence, and the last division of books, which followed my steps, increased my chosen library to the number of between six and seven thousand volumes. My seraglio was ample, my choice was free, my appetite was keen. After a full repast on Homer and Aristophanes, I involved myself in the philosophic maze of the writings of Plato, of which the dramatic is perhaps more interesting than the argumentative part; but I stepped aside into every path of inquiry which reading or reflection accidentally opened.

Alas! the joy of my return and my studious ardor were soon damped by the melancholy state of my friend Mr. Deyverdun. His health and spirits had long suffered a gradual decline; a succession of apoplectic fits announced his dissolution; and before he expired, those who loved him could not wish for the continuance of his life. The voice of reason might congratulate his deliverance, but the feelings of nature and friendship could be subdued only by time: his amiable character was still alive in my remembrance; each room, each walk, was imprinted with our common footsteps; and I should blush at my own philosophy, if a long interval of study had not preceded and followed the death of my friend. By his last will he left to me the option of purchasing his house and garden, or of possessing them during my life, on the payment either of a stipulated price, or of an easy retribution to his kinsman and heir. I should probably have been tempted by the demon of property,

if some legal difficulties had not been started against my title; a contest would have been vexatious, doubtful, and invidious; and the heir most gratefully subscribed an agreement, which rendered my life-possession more perfect, and his future condition more advantageous. Yet I had often revolved the judicious lines in which Pope answers the objections of his long-sighted friend: —

> "Pity to build without or child or wife;
> Why, you 'll enjoy it only all your life:
> Well, if the use be mine, does it concern one,
> Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon?"

The certainty of my tenure has allowed me to lay out a considerable sum in improvements and alterations: they have been executed with skill and taste; and few men of letters, perhaps, in Europe, are so desirably lodged as myself. But I feel, and with the decline of years I shall more painfully feel, that I am alone in paradise. Among the circle of my acquaintance at Lausanne, I have gradually acquired the solid and tender friendship of a respectable family; the four persons of whom it is composed are all endowed with the virtues best adapted to their age and situation; and I am encouraged to love the parents as a brother, and the children as a father. Every day we seek and find the opportunities of meeting; yet even this valuable connection cannot supply the loss of domestic society.

Within the last two or three years our tranquillity has been clouded by the disorders of France; many families at Lausanne were alarmed and affected by the terrors of an impending bankruptcy; but the revolution, or rather the dissolution of the kingdom, has been heard and felt in the adjacent lands.

I beg leave to subscribe my assent to Mr. Burke's creed on the revolution of France. I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can almost excuse his reverence for church establishments. I have sometimes thought of writing a dialogue of the dead, in which Lucian, Erasmus, and Voltaire should mutually acknowledge the danger of exposing an old superstition to the contempt of the blind and fanatic multitude.

A swarm of emigrants of both sexes, who escaped from the public ruin, has been attracted by the vicinity, the manners, and the language of Lausanne; and our narrow habitations in town and country are now occupied by the first names and titles of the departed monarchy. These noble fugitives are entitled to our pity; they may claim our esteem; but they cannot, in their present state of mind and fortune, much contribute to our amusement. Instead of looking down as calm and idle spectators on the theatre of Europe, our domestic harmony is somewhat imbittered by the infusion of party spirit: our ladies and gentlemen assume the character of self-taught politicians; and the sober dictates of wisdom and experience are silenced by the clamor of the triumphant *democrates*. The fanatic missionaries of sedition have scattered the seeds of discontent in our cities and villages, which have flourished above two hundred and fifty years without fearing the approach of war or feeling the weight of government. Many individuals, and some communities, appear to be infected with the Gallic frenzy, the wild theories of equal and boundless freedom; but I trust that the body of the people will be faithful to their sovereign and to themselves; and I am satisfied that the failure or success of a revolt would equally terminate in the

ruin of the country. While the aristocracy of Berne protects the happiness, it is superfluous to inquire whether it be founded in the rights, of man: the economy of the state is liberally supplied without the aid of taxes; and the magistrates *must* reign with prudence and equity, since they are unarmed in the midst of an armed nation.

The revenue of Berne, excepting some small duties, is derived from church lands, tithes, feudal rights, and interest of money. The republic has nearly £500,000 sterling in the English funds, and the amount of their treasure is unknown to the citizens themselves. For myself (may the omen be averted!) I can only declare, that the first stroke of a rebel drum would be the signal of my immediate departure.

When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery: in the civilized world the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty; and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honorable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. The general probability is about three to one, that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year.* I have now passed that age, and may fairly estimate the present value of my existence in the threefold division of mind, body, and estate.

1. The first and indispensable requisite of happi-

* See Buffon, Supplèment à l'Histoire Naturelle, Tom. VII. p. 158 – 164: of a given number of new-born infants, one half, by the fault of nature or man, is extinguished before the age of puberty and reason. A melancholy calculation!

ness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action : —

"Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ."

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity : some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure ; and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties. The original soil has been highly improved by cultivation ; but it may be questioned whether some flowers of fancy, some grateful errors, have not been eradicated with the weeds of prejudice. 2. Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. "The madness of superfluous health" I have never known, but my tender constitution has been fortified by time, and the inestimable gift of the sound and peaceful slumbers of infancy may be imputed both to the mind and body. 3. I have already described the merits of my society and situation ; but these enjoyments would be tasteless or bitter, if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. According to the scale of Switzerland, I am a rich man ; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes. My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse. Shall I add, that since the failure of my first wishes I have

never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection.

I am disgusted with the affectation of men of letters, who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow, and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution.* My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson; twenty happy years have been animated by the labor of my History, and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character, in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled. The freedom of my writings has indeed provoked an implacable tribe; but as I was safe from the stings, I was soon accustomed to the buzzing of the hornets; my nerves are not tremblingly alive, and my literary temper is so happily framed that I am less sensible of pain than of pleasure. The rational pride of an author may be offended, rather than flattered, by vague indiscriminate praise; but he cannot, he should not, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Even his moral sympathy may be gratified by the idea, that now, in the present hour, he is imparting some degree of amusement or knowledge to his friends in a distant land; that one day his mind will be familiar to the grandchildren of those who are yet unborn.† I cannot boast of the friend-

* Mr. d'Alembert relates, that as he was walking in the gardens of Sans Souci with the King of Prussia, Frederick said to him, "Do you see that old woman, a poor weeder, asleep on that sunny bank? She is probably a more happy being than either of us." The king and the philosopher may speak for themselves; for my part, I do not envy the old woman.

† In the first of ancient or modern romances (Tom Jones) this proud sentiment, this feast of fancy, is enjoyed by the genius of Fielding: "Come, bright love of fame, etc., fill my ravished fancy with the hopes

ship or favor of princes; the patronage of English literature has long since been devolved on our booksellers, and the measure of their liberality is the least ambiguous test of our common success. Perhaps the golden mediocrity of my fortune has contributed to fortify my application.

The present is a fleeting moment; the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may *possibly* be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years.* I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis.† In private conversation that great and amiable man added the weight of his

of charming ages yet to come. Foretell me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee but to enjoy, nay even to feed on future praise. Comfort me by the solemn assurance, that when the little parlor in which I sit at this moment shall be reduced to a worse-furnished box, I shall be read with honor by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see." Book XIII. Chap. I.

* Mr. Buffon, from our disregard of the possibility of death within the four-and-twenty hours, concludes that a chance which falls below or rises above ten thousand to one will never affect the hopes or fears of a reasonable man. The fact is true, but our courage is the effect of thoughtlessness rather than of reflection. If a public lottery were drawn for the choice of an immediate victim, and if our name were inscribed on one of the ten thousand tickets, should we be perfectly easy?

† See Buffon.

own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.*

* The proportion of a part to the whole is the only standard by which we can measure the length of our existence. At the age of twenty one year is a tenth, perhaps, of the time which has elapsed within our consciousness and memory: at the age of fifty it is no more than the fortieth, and this relative value continues to decrease till the last sands are shaken by the hand of death. This reasoning may seem metaphysical; but on a trial it will be found satisfactory and just. The warm desires, the long expectations of youth, are founded on the ignorance of themselves and of the world: they are gradually damped by time and experience, by disappointment and possession; and after the middle season the crowd must be content to remain at the foot of the mountain, while the few who have climbed the summit aspire to descend or expect to fall. In old age the consolation of hope is reserved for the tenderness of parents who commence a new life in their children; the faith of enthusiasts who sing hallelujahs above the clouds; and the vanity of authors who presume the immortality of their name and writings.

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